

# THE LESBIAN TIDE

A FEMINIST LESBIAN PUBLICATION, WRITTEN BY AND FOR THE RISING TIDE OF WOMEN TODAY

**Looking at Coalition Politics  
Teachers Face Witchhunt  
Lesbian Freedom Riders  
Dykes on Bikes**



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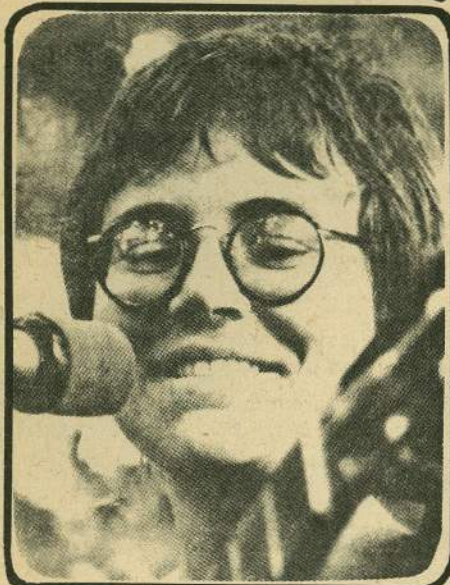
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# Lesbian Tide

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## EDITORIAL POLICY

In the interest of fostering open communication and progressive theoretical development, *The Lesbian Tide* prints a wide variety of views from the lesbian, feminist, and gay communities. Our editorial perspective also includes coverage of other social change movements as they relate to women. The views expressed in this publication are not those of Tide Publications or the Editorial and Political Collective unless specifically by-lined as such.

The Editorial and Political Collective is a group of radical feminist lesbians who believe basic change in our society is a pre-requisite to real liberation for women and lesbians. We publish editorials stating our views and analysis on particular issues.

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## Table of Contents

### PERSPECTIVES

Coalition Politics, A Necessary Alliance .....	4
Profile: Liz Stevens .....	6
Noble Declines Re-election .....	7
Lesbian Visibility at Houston IWY .....	8

### NEWS CURRENTS

Polls Show Fear of Gays and Children .....	12
Gay Teachers Face Initiative .....	13
Gay Victory in Frisco .....	14
Guerillas Punch Out Tropicana .....	15
Bryant Re-hired .....	15

### SHORT CURRENTS .....

Massachusetts Referendum Coming	
New Abortion Laws, Olivia Records Moving, 3rd Novel for Rita Mae	

### EDITORIAL

Gay, Feminist Leaders Call for End to "Choice" .....	21
TIDE Celebrates 6th Birthday .....	22
MOTHERS (updates on custody) .....	24

### SPORTS LOOK

Dykes on Bikes .....	26
Falcons Expell Lesbians .....	27

### REVIEWS .....

Witchy plays & books, <i>By Her Own Admission</i> , <i>Lesbian Concentrate</i>	
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## Coalition Politics: A Necessary Alliance

*In the following dialogue radical lesbian feminists evaluate the shifting political climate of the last several months, and they discuss their activism in terms of a new wave of coalition politics. Participants include: Judy Freespirit who is currently working with the Freedom Ride-IWY Project, and the New Alliance for Gay Equality; Ivy Bottini, a ten year activist in the Women's Movement, now with the Los Angeles Human Rights Coalition; Jeanne Cordova, also now with Freedom Ride-IWY, New A.G.E., and Lesbian Tide; Maria Ramos, socialist feminist.*

**HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE NOW AS COMPARED TO THAT OF SIX MONTHS AGO?**

**Ivy:** There is an urgency. Since Dade County none of us want to sit around anymore and talk about what we should be doing. The air is ready for immediate action.

**Jeanne:** The urgency is much deeper than the gay issue. This country is heading into a reactionary period. There's a growing polarization in America between the right and the left. A new right wing, perhaps unofficially headed by Ronald Reagan, began to surface shortly after Watergate. The Republican Party is in deep trouble and that has given a lot of weight to a new right. We can expect an era that may look something like the McCarthy period. Anita Bryant was just the catalyst. Gays are the "communists" of the 1970's.

**Ivy:** . . . the gay herrings instead of the red herrings.

**Maria:** The current attacks by the right on women and gays is both connected to and made more ominous by the fact that American capitalism (and therefore world capitalism) is in deep crisis. This is in marked distinction to the McCarthy Era which occurred during a period of economic growth. The economic crisis surfaced in 1971 with the first trade deficit, rapid inflation, and a growing national debt which resulted in the devaluation of the dollar.

The crisis is clearly visible today in the collapse of the inner cities (i.e. New York) and in the consistent and successful attacks by capitalists on working people. (The average take-home pay of an American family of 3 is the same as it was in 1965, in spite of



Radical lesbians draw "bottom lines" for dykes in coalition politics. (Left, Jeanne Cordova, Right, Judy Freespirit).

the substantial rise in the costs of living. This represents a *real* decline in living standards, particularly since increasing numbers of married women are taking second jobs.)

This makes the current attack on gays and women by the right more dangerous than the attack on communists during the 50's. It is important to note that fascism in Italy and Germany arose in the midst of a totally devastated capitalist economy.

**Ivy:** I read an article in *Time* magazine the other day which questioned, 'Where are the radicals of the 60's the New Left?'

**Judy:** They're all in EST!

We are not just talking about the last six months. The last *week* has been the most horrendous politically that I can ever remember! We've lost federal government money for abortions, and our president came out with a welfare reform proposal that's incredibly outrageous. He wants to do away with AFDC and food stamps.

**Jeanne:** Just to round out the weekend, the Senate



voted on the first piece of gay legislation ever to come to federal attention. They voted to prohibit gays from marrying.

**Judy:** All of this is connected with what happened in Dade County. The economics of this country are getting so bad that someone's going to have to get pushed out. People are unemployed. Somebody's got to go. In order to push someone out, you need a definable group. It doesn't surprise me that gay teachers are going to be the first to go because there haven't been enough teaching jobs to go around for a long time now. Middle class people are afraid now too. They're going to school and getting credentials and can't find jobs. It's the beginning of a racist wave and I think it's very frightening.

**Jeanne:** We have to understand Bryant and her like in this political and economic context. A society propped up by a war-making economy (capitalism) turns inward upon itself during "peace" time.

**Ivy:** I think they are testing the water with the gay issue. If the emotion can run high enough and they can get middle America hysterical enough over gays, they can get whoever they want next on the coat-tails of that hysteria. Once the voters get out of control with fear, nobody's safe.

**Jeanne:** It's also important to recognize that this wave of reaction is taking the form of a *religious* war. Religion and patriotism are the hallmarks of the right. They make the best banners precisely because they are so irrational. You can't fight irrationality and hysteria with common sense or even guns.

**Ivy:** While we're sorting out the Constitution, there will be a lot of people dying, or losing their jobs and careers.

**Jeanne:** That's why I can't buy this, 'the solution is to educate the silent majority' line. Social change is a power struggle, not an educational program. It's like Elaine Noble said in Denver, if the country was given the opportunity to vote on the Bill of Rights, it would lose. Winning is not a matter of changing people's consciousness.

**Judy:** There are rights that we have to win and gains that we have to protect from erosion. We need to take a good hard look at the Black Movement. They got nowhere with 'good-image.' We need to get militant and start some fires. *First*, you get your rights and *then* you educate people.

#### Don't Get Off the Streets

#### GIVEN THIS POLITICAL CLIMATE, WHAT STRATEGIES SHOULD RADICALS BE TAKING?

**Ivy:** One thing we can't do is sit quietly in a room isolated.

**Judy:** When I was a nine year old during World War II, I remember my grandmother getting a letter saying everyone in her family in Czechoslovakia had been taken away by the Nazis except an old uncle who was too sick to get out of bed so they just set the bed on fire. Later I thought, 'How stupid. Those people, my people, just walked into the gas chambers with towels over their arms.' Five minutes before they died they still tried to believe they were going to take

showers. The traditional response is, 'Be quiet and maybe they will go away.' This doesn't work. The Blacks were polite for 100 years after the Civil War. They got nothing until they got militant.

**Jeanne:** When Watts burned things began to happen for Blacks. At the 'Gay Leadership National Conference' in Denver (July) some leaders were saying, "Gays don't want any more referendums. Don't do *anything* that will initiate a referendum." What they are really saying is, 'Stop the Gay Movement.' Because if we do go forward and succeed in getting any legislation passed, it may very well result in a referendum. Gays in California and Massachusetts have essentially done nothing except form organizations since Dade County, yet we both may well face referendums in 1978. Are our leaders telling us, 'Let's put the Gay Movement on ice for a while. Things are too



Ivy Bottini warns, "Communists were the red herrings of the 50's, we're the gay herrings of the 70's."

hot. No more attempts for legislation?"

It's even worse in the Women's Movement. Some feminists are suggesting, 'Lesbians ought to be low profile for a while.' Some feminists are acting like they now believe the ERA is stalled because of lesbians, that the Supreme Court is making decisions against abortion because lesbians back it, that the government is abridging abortion rights because of lesbians and that Phyllis Schlafley is moving on International Women's Year because of lesbianism. The reality of the facts are America is doing all these things because the powers that be are anti-feminist, let alone anti-lesbian. We are being asked, by the right, by the left, and by our movements to take a step back into the closet. If we do, they won't thank us, they will ask us to take *another* step backwards.

**Ivy:** One of the things that went wrong with the Women's Movement is that everyone put their white gloves on and made like ladies — to pass. After the early days they kept a low profile. I learned from the Women's Movement that you don't get off the streets. You may not *always* be on them, but you don't get off. We have to reach the closet gays and tap their energies. As the heat gets hotter we will find more people coming forward. Then the army will build and when we do hit the streets we won't just march on the federal building!

*continued on page 36*



# Profile: Liz Stevens: Passing as Herself



photo by Iris Films

Liz Stevens (center, on camera), house painter, "tire buster," and film maker, documents the lives of lesbian mothers. Stevens and Frances Reid (right) are members of Iris Films, producers of "In The Best Interest of the Children."

by Sharon McDonald

By the time Liz Stevens fell in love with another woman she was married and a mother. It was 1969. "I remember going to San Francisco with her and some other people for an anti-war march and spending this very intense weekend; but we were both straight. Coming home in the car, riding all the way back to L.A. in the back seat she slept with her head in my lap. Her boyfriend was right next to us. He was so threatened."

"The night before our c-r group was scheduled to discuss sexuality. I went over to her house and we talked for hours and hours and I drank cups and cups of coffee before I finally got up the nerve to say, 'I think I'm a lesbian,' and tell her I loved her. We both knew what that meant, and she went off with her man."

"After that I went everywhere I could to be with women. Finally the night before my 29th birthday, the first women's coffeehouse opened in L.A. I was so new to everything. The woman I am today would have terrified me then. But I walked in and I was home. I felt like I was 18 again and could start my life all over. A week later I came out."

Two weeks after that Liz Stevens left her husband, two children, and house in the suburbs. "I also left all my old copies of *Ain't I A Woman* and *The Ladder* hidden on the top shelf in, of course, the closet! I wonder if he ever found them?"

In the 6 years since coming out Liz has been a house painter, house mover, carpenter, gardener, leather-worker, "tire buster" (for diesel trucks), and most recently a filmmaker. She worked politically first with L.A.'s original Lesbian Feminist group, with *Sister Newspaper* for two and a half years, and now helps organize with the Los Angeles Women's Community Forum and the Lesbian Feminists of Los Angeles. In 1975 Liz and 2 other women started Iris Films, a lesbian filmmaking and distribution company which has just produced *In the Best Interests of the Children*, a film about lesbian mothers.

The idea of ME making a film is so amazing!" Liz's working class background had never presented such options. "Working at Iris was the first time I had ever created a job for myself. The discipline had to be mine, and I had to have confidence. I had not had much practice being self-directed and confident."

But Iris Films came complete with a multitude of problems. There were all the old familiar activist's woes, like "there's-not-enough-money," and the body's rebellion against round-the-clock work schedules. There was also the complex and demanding issue of class.

"Part of the time we were making the film, I was working a full-time night job, and the other members of the collective were just working on the film. This kind of situation breeds resentment, and it was impossible to ignore the question of class. Problems came up dealing with money. One of the women had never had to work to support herself. We had to work very hard at understanding each other's backgrounds and assumptions. My background is working class, and the struggle was made worse by my anger, which at times did not further the possibility of discussing class! None of us knew how to deal with it. I felt like we failed."

Ironically, Liz got a good basic background in labor politics from her parents, who later became "management," both literally and ideologically. "I grew up with parents who had very strong labor politics. Both were union workers, Catholic, in blue collar jobs. My mother worked in a garment factory and later became a stenographer. My father was a machinist. Later he finally got a white collar job in the purchasing department at Lockheed and his whole identity as a worker switched to management. He was so proud of having a white collar job, even though at the time I was making more money doing maintenance work on trucks than he was. He once said to me with much pride, 'I know you'll do alright because you're able to walk into a room with any kind of people and pull

*continued on page 38*



# Noble Politics: Won't Run for Re-election

by Julie Robinson

In a bombshell speech fraught with political innuendo, Elaine Noble (Rep. D, Mass.) told a Denver gay audience that she wouldn't be running for re-election.

Speaking at the National Gay Leadership Conference on July 30, Noble addressed the losses of Dade County and made a strong pitch for *federal* legislative solidarity. She discouraged her audience from channeling energy into state or county legislation which, she said, would only result in referendum.

Summarizing a brief history of the Populist Movement of this century, Noble pointed out that referendum and recall have been legislative survival tools of most oppressed minorities. But she fears that it is precisely these tools that Anita Bryant and her supporters will continue to use to deny gays our civil rights. "Let The People vote on a gay rights referendum and they will vote us down!" she said.

She noted the legislative recall mechanism can easily be used to challenge the right of any pro-gay elected official to hold office. Given the opportunity, Noble feels that most Americans would vote down the Bill of Rights.

## Won't Seek Re-election

It is to be expected that public speakers will influence an audience, but how they use that influence is crucial.

Noble is a board member, and at the conference an official representative, of the Gay Rights National Lobby which is committed to federal legislation. The National Gay Task Force, another co-sponsor of the conference and advocate of national lobbying as exemplified by their recent meetings at the White House concerning homosexual rights, also supports and helps organize state and local efforts to achieve homosexual equality. Noble told only one side of the story and it was left up to the audience to ponder if there might be a political split between GRNL and NGTF.

She dropped her political bombshell of the evening when she commented that she would not seek re-election as a state legislator if her state gay rights bill was brought to referendum in Massachusetts. Her reasoning was that she could not successfully divide her energy between an election campaign and a referendum. Such a decision involves much more process than Noble's one-liner implied — yet this announcement drew from her audience both shock and sympathy while leaving a great deal unexplained.

What was unexplained is that Noble's district was recently redistricted such that she would have to face the very popular Rep. Barney Frank (also pro-gay) in a forthcoming re-election. Also unexplained is that Noble and Frank have already negotiated an arrangement which will see Noble running for a Boston City Council seat, and Frank campaigning for the congressional spot. (See related story in Short Currents section.)

## Organizers Sponsor Sexism

Taking advantage of this highly charged atmosphere, Noble paused and almost as an afterthought tackled the most controversial feminist topic of the evening — one that had been sorely missing from the entire conference — sexism in the gay rights movement.

Nowhere in her formal remarks had she specifically addressed the needs of women, nor had feminism been granted any theoretical or political importance.



photo by Metro Gay News

Ginny Apuzzo of the Gay Rights National Lobby makes brave apology for sexist leaflet presented at National Gay Leadership Conference

Noble proceeded, however, to ask the audience to thank Michael, an illustrator from New York, who had donated his talent to design a leaflet inviting all participants to attend a no-host cocktail party sponsored by the Gay Rights National Lobby. His illustration was a drawing of a high-camp 40's Heddy Lamar Lookalike (sophisticated drag queen), complete with parted lips, painted fingernails, and contour tight black evening gown.

After her speech, the Conference delegates were to vote on a series of resolutions which would culminate the political goals of the weekend. Unless one had actually worked on a specific resolution, the audience was basically unaware of the issues to be presented.

Yet Noble was obviously aware of the fact that a resolution condemning the sexism of the leaflet was going to be presented. She took advantage of her position as speaker to pre-lobby against the resolution. And her pitch for Michael as a fledgling gay activist taking his first step out of the closet by doing the leaflet, effectively juxtaposed the issue of sexism vs. humanity. When the issue came up a half hour later, Noble again lobbied on behalf of the illustrator and GRNL and kept the focus on Michael instead of politics. The effect of her approval of the illustration was manipulative and self-serving. When a straw vote was taken, the vote was a dangerous 60-40 split against condemning the leaflet. Sensing the anger of the lesbians Noble suggested the lesbian authors of

*continued on page 38*



# FREEDOM RIDERS Bus to Houston

by Jeanne Cordova

Lesbian feminists in Los Angeles are calling on their sisters across the country to join them in a FREEDOM RIDE. They are pressing for lesbian visibility and gay rights at the International Women's Year Conference in Houston (Nov. 18-21).

The L.A. FREEDOM RIDE bus, "The Spirit of Sappho" will be departing from Los Angeles several days before the Conference. They also plan for bus and car caravans to leave from major cities on both coasts and from the midwest. The organization further projects that caravans will stop in cities along the way to hold press conferences or launch actions planned by local lesbians. They recommend that wherever possible lesbians should use buses owned or operated by community groups. At this time, however, "The Spirit of Sappho" is a Continental Trailways bus which seats 46 passengers.

FREEDOM RIDE-IWY Task Force Co-coordinator Judy Freespirit stresses that the exciting trip is not a vacation tour. "It may be a lot of fun and will certainly be an experience, but women need to understand that this is basically a political action. We want women who are prepared to do some political work." Asked if there was some possible danger in taking a bus of dykes through red neck country to south Texas, Freespirit replied, "Yes, this is true. Although we are taking every security precaution and the bus company of course has its regulations,



this is not like sitting in your living room discussing lesbian rights." The group also noted first priority seating will be given to the required number of lesbian nurses, doctors, lawyers, and security women.

In a recent press release the lesbian freedom-riders explained the need for lesbian visibility at the national gathering, "Lesbians have too long been invisible numbers in other people's movements. We are now under attack and must therefore come out as a unique and definitive force. We see the IWY Conference as a forum for presenting our issues.

We are outraged by the fact that the International Women's Year Conferences (both state and national) are government controlled, and that many of the delegates are men. We are aware that in many

respects the Houston Conference serves only to make our government look credible in its role of international "Champion of Human Rights," and to pacify women into believing that our government has a major commitment to feminism. By our presence, visibility, and actions in Houston we mean to say that simply a "Report to Congress" (the official result of the Conference) is not an acceptable substitute for legislation protecting the self-determination and full civil rights of women in America."

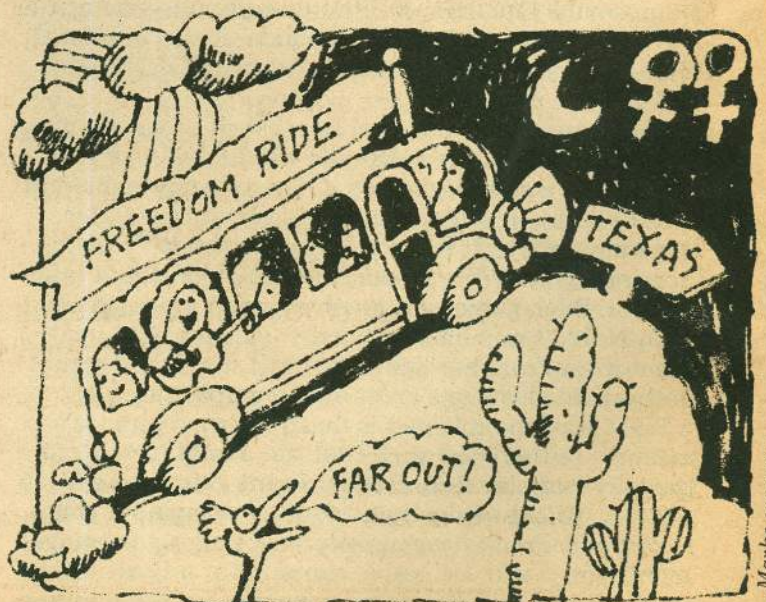
"The Spirit of Sappho" will hold a press conference in Los Angeles the morning they depart. They plan to take Route 10 east, stopping in San Bernadino, California, Tucson, Arizona and San Antonio, Texas for more action or press conferences. The tentative round trip cost per person is \$110, but the organizers have fundraisers scheduled and intend to heavily subsidize the cost for all who can't afford full fee. A \$25 dollar minimum deposit is being asked. On their application women will be asked to state how much of the total trip they can afford. For reservation forms, write the organization at the address below. A ten hour volunteer work commitment (helping with pre-trip organization work) is also required. Women who cannot go to Houston but wish to support this visibility effort are asked to make what donations they can.

The Los Angeles group suggests that

IWY: Cookie Hunt of Seattle, WA is Co-ordinating the FREEDOM RIDE for lesbians living in the northwest. Call her at (206) 324-3249

THE PUSHY LESBIAN Caucus at the Missouri state IWY stood up in the plenary session and had passed three lesbian resolutions by a floor vote of 191-141! A sister there writes, "I had never before seen such support for lesbian rights from so many straight women, all ages and backgrounds, including church ministers. It felt good to know that even in an anti-ERA state . . . attitudes are progressing and women are starting to overcome the divisive force of sexual labels."

(Lesbian Connection)





the *West Coast Caravan* might begin in Seattle, travel south through Portland and Eugene, Oregon, then down Highway 5 to San Francisco, and join the "Spirit of Sappho" in L.A.

Their further recommendations include:

*Midwest Caravan*: departure points in Ann Arbor and Chicago. Ann Arbor may take Highway 94 to Chicago. The caravan may proceed south on Highway 55 to

Baton Rouge, and then east on Highway 10 to Houston.

*East Coast Caravan*: may depart as far north as Portland, Maine, travel south on Highway 95 through Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington D.C. Depending on response and the needs of east coast organizers, the caravan may then proceed south on 95 to Jacksonville, Florida and then east on 10 to

Houston, or the route may go west out of D.C. on Highways 70, 81 and 59, into Dallas, Texas.

Groups or individuals who wish to co-ordinate their **FREEDOM RIDES** with the Los Angeles IWY Task Force are urged to write for more information: **FREEDOM RIDE-IWY**, 2617 Euclid Avenue No. B, Santa Monica, CA 90405. Or call, (213) 396-1438.

# Send a Lesbian To Houston

Special Benefit Show featuring **HARRISON & TYLER** (top feminist comediennes), and **KELLIE GREENE** ("America's number one jazz pianist"), at Studio One in Hollywood, Sept. 19. ALL proceeds are going to send lesbians to the International Women's Year Conference in Houston to lobby for the gay rights resolution and lesbian visibility. For reservations call 657-0158 or send your \$25 ticket/donation to : Women's Center-IWY, % 1219 Sunset Plaza Drive #4, Los Angeles, CA. 90069.

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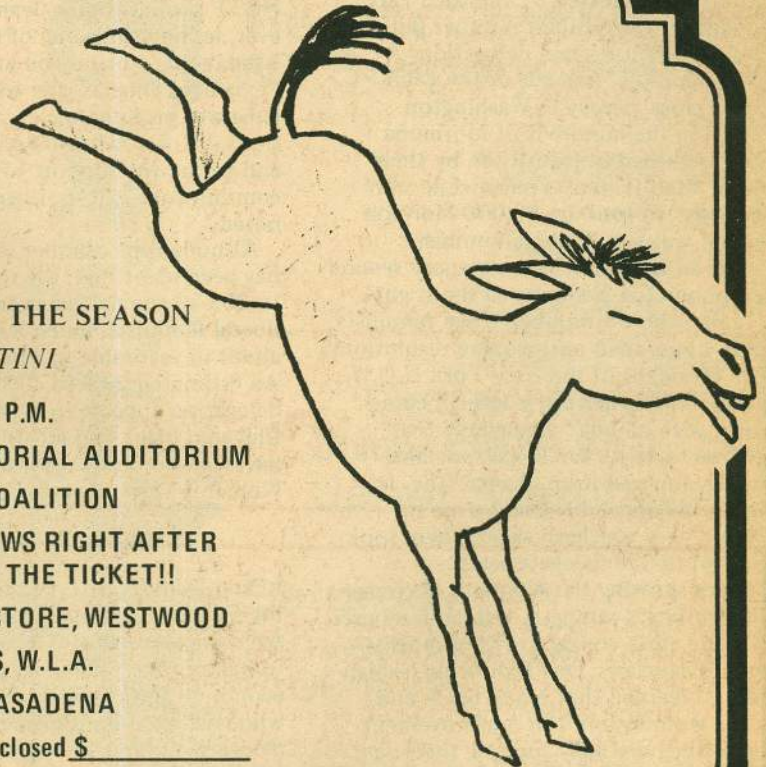
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# IWY:

## Most States Back Lesbian Rights

by Jeanne Cordova

Lesbian feminist activity in the State International Women's Year Conferences seems to have paid off. With statistics still being gathered, tabulations now indicate that at least twenty six states passed pro-gay resolutions. "It looks as though we've made it with the majority of states," reports the National Gay Task Force which is compiling statistics from 57 states and territories which hosted IWY conferences.

Despite their significant take-overs of at least 10 states, final statistics now indicate the anti-feminists captured no more than 15 to 20% of the 1,442 elected delegate seats. This strong showing is a result of heavy lesbian feminist participation in the heated state battles between feminists and anti-feminists. Feminists, lesbians and some gay men waged political struggle against the Nazi Party (in the southern states), the Mormon Church (in the midwest) and Phyllis Schlafly's Pro-America and Eagle Forum in the larger east and west coast cities. Feminists from Mississippi were heavily besieged and partially defeated by the Nazi Party who elected five of their number (all male) to the Mississippi delegation. A strong coalition "Friends of the ERA" swept a close victory in Washington away from the hundreds of Mormons who were bused in from Utah by their church. Utah feminists meanwhile were hopelessly over-run by 10,000 Mormon men and women. A single feminist delegate in Hawaii held the plenary session microphone for 2½ hours so the Right-To-Lifers who outnumbered the feminists, couldn't pass their anti-woman resolutions.

The President of the New York N.O.W. chapter, credits her city's lesbian community with all but "managing" that state's victory. As for Texas, one anti-feminist summed it up nicely, "the militant libbers and lesbians were in control." Our southern sisters there took 52 out of the 58 delegate seats.

Besides showing the Women's Movement their significant strength, lesbian feminists also made close contacts with minority women's caucuses. One California lesbian noted, "I learned that many black and chicana women aren't in our movement because they are busy running their own. At the California Conference we met with them and saw them in action working for their own issues, on their own turf." Lesbians across the country were reminded that the plight of undocumented workers is for chicana activists perhaps more relevant than freedom to abort, that the

poverty of Native Americans makes the Equal Rights Amendment look like a luxury item to many delegates from the southwest, and that welfare rights touches black women in a way that "sexual freedom" doesn't begin to. California Chicana delegate Sally Martinez said her groups were "shocked" at the number and organization of the Lesbian Caucus. "We also didn't know that you all supported our issues so much," she explained. Asked how she felt chicana delegates would respond to gay rights resolutions in Houston, she replied, "It's a very difficult thing to understand or accept in our culture." In the heat of struggle within the feminist and lesbian movements it is sometimes difficult to remember that ethnic women within our movement are far more radical than their general community, just as white feminists do not reflect the real consciousness of the majority of white women.

At this time it is not certain whether majority issues such as lesbianism will be voted on in a block in Houston or be presented individually. According to NGTF spokeswoman Jean O'Leary however, lesbianism is one of the strongest issues going to Houston and there is an "excellent chance" the National Conference will pass one or several gay resolutions. "If we co-ordinate with others and garner the support of the feminist community . . . it looks good," O'Leary noted.

Although the number of anti-feminists has been identified, the remaining 80% to 85% of the delegates are not necessarily liberal feminists, much less knowledgeable about or favorable to a gay resolution. An estimated 20% to 40% of the total delegation appears to be Native American, Chicana, Black and anglo women who have had no direct association with the Women's Movement.

### 400 To Be Selected

In addition to the 1,442 elected delegates, the Federal Commissioners will be selecting another 400 delegates at large to balance the final delegation for economic and ethnic backgrounds. Lesbians who wish to submit nominations for delegates at large are urged to do so by sending the nominee's name, age, ethnicity/race, creed, etc. to Susan Myers at the National Gay Task Force, 80 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011.

Nominees should state if they are out front lesbians and make some statement as to why they wish to be delegates.

## Houston Conference Activities

The National IWY Conference will be held at the Coliseum in Houston, Texas on November 18-21. The conference will open Friday evening with speeches and entertainment and conclude Monday at noon. 1,742 delegates will spend the weekend discussing and voting on a compilation of resolutions passed by the state conference and 7,000 "observers" will be admitted to the Coliseum to watch the proceedings. Non-delegates may not vote and there will be no voting in the workshops. At this time it is not definite who will pass out the "official observer" pass passes or who is eligible to receive them. Jean O'Leary, New York delegate and IWY Commissioner explained that women who do volunteer work for the Houston conference will probably be the first in line. Volunteers are needed to arrive in Houston on Wednesday or Thursday Nov. 16 & 17 to be trained in security, parliamentary procedures and related communications work. Interested lesbians should contact NGTF co-chairwoman Pokey Anderson at: Point Blank Times, P.O. Box 14643, Houston, Texas 77021.

Anderson and the Houston lesbian community are also co-ordinating housing for the 1,000 to 2,000 lesbians expected in Houston that week.

### Seneca Falls Revisited

A host of activities planned primarily for non-delegates will be offered in Houston. "Seneca Falls" will be a round-the-clock clock entertainment and educational program featuring speeches, poetry readings, karate demonstrations, etc. A woman's lecture series about practical aspects of women's lives will also be offered offered on Saturday. Dozens of workshops will cover a variety of "how-to" topics. Lesbians interested in being part of the programs should write: Seneca Falls Committee or the Program Committee of the National IWY Office at U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520.

### NGTF Setting Up Communications

The Women's Caucus of the National Gay Task Force will set up a "Hospitality Suite" at the Conference, where delegates may caucus with other delegates and also a "Communications Center" where delegates and non-delegates may get information, and find out what needs to be done. NGTF is also currently polling all state delegations to determine how many out-front lesbian delegates will be there. For more information contact Susan Myers, NGTF, 80 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011 (212) 741-1010



## CALIF. WILL PAY FOR ABORTIONS

by Cheryl Diehm

California women will still be able to use medical funds to pay for abortions despite major set backs to the abortion movement on a national level. Governor Jerry Brown has committed the state to pick up the additional cost of medical coverage for abortions — estimated to be about \$29 million annually — now that the federal government will no longer pay for abortions for poor women.

However, Brown was "deliberately vague" in his statement, indicating that state assistance can, at best, be only temporary, according to Kate McDonough, Director of the Westside Women's Clinic in Santa Monica.

Best estimates are that Brown will continue state support until January when the state legislature will reconvene and legislation authorizing continued state monies can be introduced. Pro-choice abortion activists will use the intervening months to lobby state legislators to support such legislation and view their chances in January as more possible than if

legislation were to be introduced in this session.

In the meantime, tentative plans are underway for a demonstration either in Los Angeles or San Francisco in late September to protest federal restrictions on abortion rights. Plans were not finalized at press time, but for further developments, call the Westside Women's Clinic at 450-2191.

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## Polls Show Fear of Gays and Children

Polls conducted by Harris and Gallup soon after the Dade County defeat confirmed that the Save Our Children theme of Bryant and Briggs plays upon the fears and prejudices of a strong majority of Americans. Consistently the 1500-2000 person samplings of national attitudes towards homosexuality indicated that gays working with young children sustain the most discrimination. Apparently the further removed gays are from children, the less resistance there is to our civil rights protections. The majority belief that homosexuality has become more widespread in the past 25 years seems to reflect a growing awareness of gays due to widespread national publicity.

### GALLUP RESULTS

Should homosexual relations between consenting adults be legal?	YES 43%	NO 43%
Do you believe that homosexuality is more widespread than it was a quarter-century ago?	68%	24%
Is homosexuality a product of (A) upbringing and social environment?	56%	
(B) innate predisposition	12%	
In general, do you think homosexuals should have equal rights in terms of job opportunities?	56%	33%

### HARRIS RESULTS

Should homosexuals be allowed to work as counselors in a camp for young people?	27%	63%
as police officers	48%	42% 42%
as artists	86%	7%
as factory workers	85%	7%
as television news commentators	72%	19%
as congresspeople	53%	37%
Should homosexuals be barred from certain jobs even if they are qualified?	48%	41%

LATE FLASH: Results of a *New York Times*/CBS News poll on job discrimination against gays parallels the above surveys. 61% believe it wrong to deny people jobs because of sexual preference, 50% support laws to protect gays on their jobs. The survey indicates younger people are more pro-gay, with support declining among the middle-aged and older.



# Teachers May Face Initiative

by Jeanne Cordova

Anita Bryant's "lieutenant," Senator John Briggs (R) has declared war on California gays. If he is successful, a second national gay battleground will form around a ballot proposition to prohibit gays from teaching in the California public school system.

At an August 3 press conference Briggs (who flew to Miami to "aid" Bryant last June) announced that California Save Our Children, Inc. has filed with the Attorney General to begin a signature gathering campaign (312,000 needed) designed to put an anti-gay teachers proposition on the June 1978 ballot. If Briggs gets his proposal certified by the Secretary of State, gets the signatures, and if the proposition is passed by the voters in June, then any teacher, counselor, aide, or administrator who "advocates, solicits, imposes, encourages or promotes private or public homosexual activity" will be fired.

The Attorney General has until September 15 to put the proposed legislation into legal language and turn it over to the Secretary of State for certification. Briggs then has 150 days to gather the signatures to make the June ballot.

"Are You Now, or Have You Ever Been . . ."

Although Briggs made repeated reference to "flagrancy" in the classrooms, under questioning he admitted his legislation includes any advocating or promoting of private or public homosexuality directed at, or *likely to come to the attention of* school children or other employees" (emphasis by editors). Clearly Briggs' measure includes any bisexual or non-gay who might support gay civil rights during a lunch hour conversation with a fellow employee. A detailed procedure for firing is spelled out which allows anyone to make charges about a teacher. The accused is then brought before the local school board and essentially put on trial. (Shades of "Are you now or have you ever been. . .")

## Hopelessly Unconstitutional

Briggs admitted to the press that he had not checked with the Attorney General to verify the constitutionality of his proposed law. Gay spokespeople and establishment press alike agreed that the legislation appeared to flagrantly abridge freedoms of association, speech,

**LATE FLASH!** Legal research to explore means of prohibiting Briggs initiative on grounds of unconstitutionality has ended with a negative decision. New A.G.E. reports two similar cases in which Supreme Court would not act to prevent an unconstitutional initiative from ballot. The courts says that "only when the issue has already been decided by the Supreme Court in earlier cases would an interference before an election be justified."

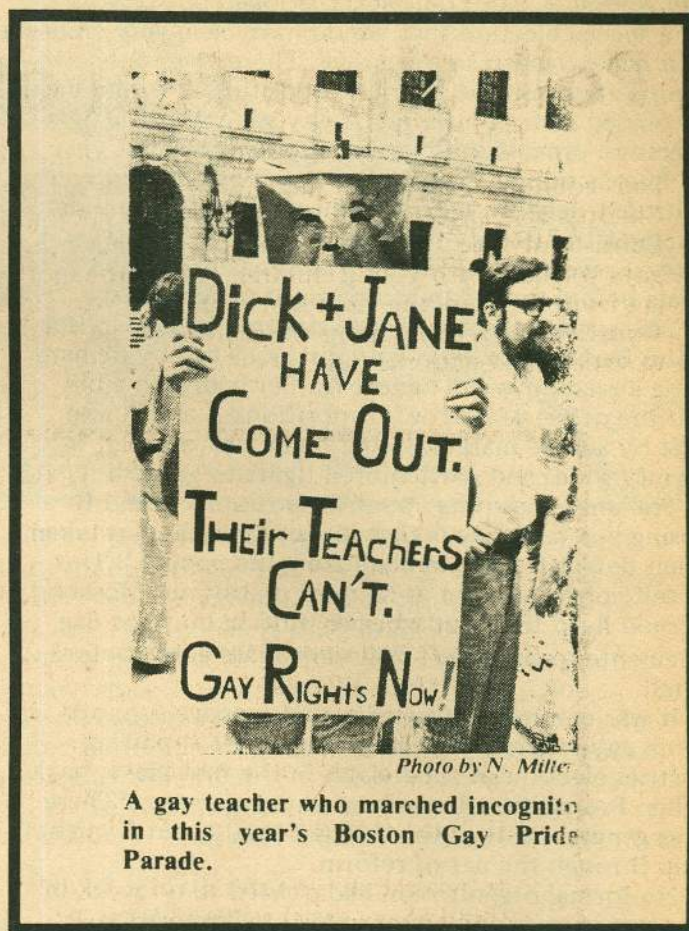


Photo by N. Miller

A gay teacher who marched incognito in this year's Boston Gay Pride Parade.

privacy, and due process. It is also unclear whether known homosexuals can be fired from their jobs in a state which has decriminalized homosexuality (January, 1977).

Because Attorney General Evelle Younger is running against Briggs in the June 1978 primaries, and because Briggs' proposal appears hopelessly unconstitutional, Younger is expected to take his time in sending the proposal to the Secretary of State. Unfortunately neither state office has the power to *prevent* an unconstitutional proposition from being placed on the ballot. PRIDE, of San Francisco, and the New Alliance for Gay Equality are exploring legal means of preventing the initiative drive on grounds of unconstitutionality. Little success is expected with this strategy. But if the proposition is passed in June, it will immediately be challenged in court and is expected to be declared unconstitutional at that point. This small hole in our legal system (passing an unconstitutional law which can only afterwards be declared unconstitutional) is expected to cost tax payers, not to mention gay teachers, several million dollars.

## 312,000 Hysterics

Although one lesbian teacher says, "The very thought of that initiative keeps me awake at night," gay

*continued on page 35*



# Gays Retain San Francisco Stronghold

By Pat Califia

On August 2, San Franciscans trooped out to vote in a special election that would have been very amusing if it had not been so expensive. There were only two propositions on the ballot. Proposition A would have rescinded district election of city supervisors, a new electoral process that had won at the polls last year as Proposition T. Proposition B was meant to do away with any need for a permanent change in a candidate's route to the Board of Supervisors. It would have forced several city officials to run again for their seats before their standard term of office was up.

This special election was engineered by Supervisor John Barbagelata, who won his fool's cap by demanding a recount when he lost (rather badly) in a bid for the office of mayor. Propositions A and B also lost by a wide margin, giving him a pair of long, pointy shoes and particolored tights to go with it.

The only bad thing about Propositions A and B losing in a landslide is that Mayor Moscone has taken their defeat for a "mandate from the people." This is self-congratulation at its most gratuitous. Moscone should heed the faint whisper wafting up from San Clemente to the effect that a mandate goeth before a fall.

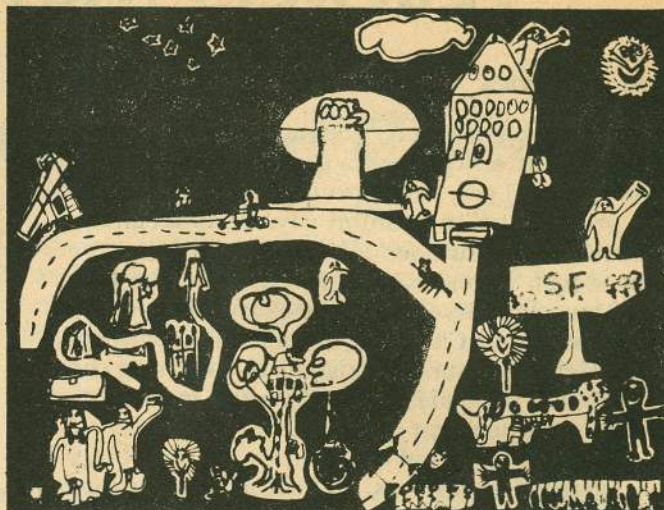
It was common knowledge that massive support from gay voters had been instrumental in passing district election of supervisors in the first place, back when Proposition T confronted the citizenry. There was general panic at the thought that A and B might slip through the net of reform.

No formal organization had existed to do work in the gay community to get votes for Proposition T. It began to seem risky to rely on word-of-mouth and "gay solidarity" to carry the day and A and B. So a coalition quickly met and constituted, "Gays for No on A and B."

In just three days, they produced a four-page tabloid which summarized arguments against the propositions and contained endorsements from individuals and groups. There were over 400 personal endorsements, including prominent lesbians. Daughters of Bilitis and Lesbians Organizing were among the endorsing lesbian groups. The Lesbian Rights Alliance added their approval shortly after publication.

The crucial argument in this leaflet, which was put together by six lesbians and six gay men, was that there was a concentration of gay voters in District 5 that had a potential for making itself heard. There had been city-wide election of supervisors ever since most of us had lived in San Francisco, and still there had never been an (out-of-the-closet) gay supervisor. As Celeste Newbrough of the Coalition for Human Rights wrote, "Propositions A and B will isolate government from the people. Local government must be responsive to neighborhoods, to communities. To the extent it is not, minorities suffer."

Now that the confetti has cleared, it remains to be seen whether district election of supervisors can be turned to the advantage of the gay community. It is true that not all the homosexuals in San Francisco



reside in District 5 (although I have heard rumors of a mass migration). Partially to prevent a split vote, a gay caucus is being organized. Every "human rights" organization in San Francisco has been invited to attend, and each organization will have two votes in the caucus. The slate of issues drawn up at this meeting will be presented to a community congress, and from there will be sent out to a congress in each district. This will insure that issues relevant to gays will be confronting voters in all parts of San Francisco. But it will take a lot of hard work to keep them there. And it will take even more hard work to get our gay supervisor — finally — from District 5.

Now, would someone like to initiate a special election and allow us to vote *only* on that recall?

**Leading Suffragist:** Alice Paul, founder of the first Women's Party in 1910, died in a Washington D.C. rest home on July 9, 1977. She was 93. She was the first to organize guerrilla tactics such as hunger strikes against oppressive labor practices. As the original author of the Equal Rights Amendment, she lobbied for its passage for 50 years, and died without seeing her dream realized.

## Confused about o.j.?

Where does that orange juice really come from? Here's a list:

Scotch Treat	California
Gelsons	California
Mayfair/Arden	California, Texas, Arizona, Brazil
Sunkist	California, Texas, Arizona, Brazil
Tree-Sweet	Florida
Tropicana	Florida
Minute Maid	Florida
Vita-Pakt	California, Arizona. (Uses concentrate from Florida.)
Ralph's	Florida
Thriftmart/Jerseymaid	Florida
Von's	Florida
Alpha Beta	Florida
Cal-Fame	Refuses to disclose source of juice.



## Guerrillas Punch Out Tropicana

Tropicana Orange Juice is one of the largest contributors (\$75,000) to Bryant's campaign to deny us human rights. The American people should not be forced to support a campaign against human rights every time we want the nourishment of orange juice.

We ask you to join an action that has already begun in New York City and across the country. This action we call

### The Tropicana Relay

Take one sharp instrument into a super market. (We use a three-inch nail.) As you browse, or shop, find the Tropicana section (quarts and half-gallon waxed containers). Puncture as many as you can. We suggest five to ten. (We recommend puncturing on the side or back toward the bottom since immediate visibility is reduced. On our first trip we punctured about five in six seconds.)

Repeat this action at five to ten super markets in one day.

Finally, recruit two people to continue the relay. This recruiting action we call TAPPING, as is done in honorary sororities. **CONSIDER YOURSELF TAPPED.**

(If you wish to expand the operation, use your own imagination. Removing plastic lids from frozen juice is frequently done.)

If by August 20th Tropicana is still on the shelf in the super market we will intensify our action by taking quart and half-gallon containers of Tropicana, placing them on frozen foods and near flour, sugar and other dry products, and puncturing them there.

How many times is a super market going to sustain the losses and messes that we create? They will sac-



Susan Carlin

rifice Tropicana and carry another brand. This will result in loss of sales for Tropicana. When TROPICANA RELAY hits nationwide we can literally put Tropicana out of business. It's in our hands.

Now is the time to ACT. If you care about our human rights, if you are angry, **FIGHT BACK.**

We demand that every Lesbian and gay man in the United States have the right to work and the right to housing and the right to custody of their own children. We vow that until that time no can, quart, or half-gallon of Tropicana orange juice will be safe.

**THE GAY GUERRILLAS**

## No Winning Streak For Bryant

by Sharon McDonald

In case you've been wondering just what the suddenly silent Ms. Bryant has been up to lately, she's won some and lost some. In June the Actors' Equity Association publicly reprimanded their member Bryant for "outspokenly embracing" discrimination against "individuals whose activity is harmful to no-one."

And in a move that sounds almost too good to be true, Bryant has been handed a temporary injunction forbidding the use of the name Save Our Children for her organization. It seems that people were getting her group confused with the Connecticut-based Save the Children Foundation, a group that gathers funds to help underprivileged children. A spokesperson from the Foundation estimated their financial loss for the month of June at \$44,000.

Meanwhile, a gay waiter from Virginia sent the gay newspaper *The Advocate* \$5 that he was tipped by diners Anita Bryant and Bob Green. Anita, do you know where your money is tonight?

(Information from *Gay Community News*, *The Advocate*)

On a less positive note, the Florida Citrus Commission announced their intention to retain Bryant as

spokesperson for their product, after two market research studies revealed that 89% of those interviewed "were not negatively affected in either their feelings toward her . . . or in their intent to buy orange juice." NBC reports that another deciding factor was the "assurances" by Bryant that she "was not on a nationwide crusade against homosexuals." (Gay Community News) Also, according to Arthur Darling, director of publicity for the Commission, "two-thirds of the 3000 people questioned nationwide 'were aware of the controversy over gay rights and her involvement in that controversy.'"



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# short currents

## THIRD NOVEL COMING FROM RITA MAE

Rita Mae Brown's third novel, "Six of One, Half Dozen of the Other" promises to recapture some of the authenticity and uniqueness of *Rubyfruit Jungle*. According to Brown's agent Sara Lukeman, the novel will be about the relationship between the author's mother and sisters, and about love expressed between women in the south. "It's very funny and incisive" says Lukeman. The book is expected next spring. Bantam is publishing.

## Gay Teacher Wins Back Pay

Newark, DE — A U.S. District Court judge has awarded back pay and damages to Richard Aumiller, a gay teacher at the University of Delaware who was fired last year because of his public acknowledgement of his homosexuality. Judge Murray Schwartz awarded former University of Delaware theatre director back pay of \$12,454 and \$15,000 in damages in a decision issued last month. Expressing the opinion that Aumiller's right of freedom of expression had been violated, Schwartz also assessed \$5,000 of the damage money personally to the university president instrumental in firing him, E. A. Trabant. (Gay Community News)

## WOMEN COACHES GET THEIRS

New York — Two women high school coaches in Long Island filed complaints of sex discrimination in New York. They charged that the school used the sex of a coach as a criteria for assigning coaching jobs and determining pay. The two women filed separate complaints with the New York Division of Human Rights, charging that the male coaches were paid twice the amount of female coaches both having the same duties. The school admitted that the male coaches were paid more but denied any sex discrimination. A hearing and investigation supported the women's charges and the district was forced to set up new wage guidelines and 27 coaches, 13 female, were awarded retroactive wages. (LNS)

## AMAZON AUTUMN

"Amazon Autumn," the first annual New Jersey Lesbian Fall Festival, will take place on Saturday, Sept. 24 in Hackensack. Conference registration is \$4 in advance or \$5 at the door. The conference will be held at the GAANJ Building, 176 Kansas St., Hackensack. (GCN)

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# Tap, Tap, Who's There?

by Kathy Proud

In 1973 Vicki Gabriner was arrested for passport fraud, an action she allegedly committed in 1970 while she was in S.D.S. She was tried and convicted and is now serving a one year probation sentence.

Seven FBI agents arrived in front of Vicki Gabriner's home in Atlanta, GA early one morning and descended upon her housemate, Marianna, as she left for work. Marianna tried to keep the agents from entering but they laughed and forced their way in.

"All the things I had been taught about your right to see a warrant or anything else were just shot," Marianna said of the experience. "When those seven agents said they were coming in — they came in. There was nothing any of us could do."



*WARNING: The Attorney General has determined that telephone usage can be dangerous to your freedom.*

As a result of pre-trial wiretap motions filed by Vicki's lawyers the FBI released illegal wiretaps made on the Students for Democratic Society national office. Vicki talks about listening to the tapes. "I was brought eyeball to eyeball with the government's power to disrupt and spy on our movements and threaten our survival. I could hear myself saying 'I don't think we should talk about that; this phone's probably tapped.' And then there I was seven years later . . ." The release of FBI files documenting illegal surveillance has made the question of government spying particularly relevant to the lesbian-feminist community. "The process of listening to the tapes, sitting in the courtroom, feeling the humiliation of dealing with the probation department, rekindled my commitment to the principles and ideals that moved me to activism," Vicki asserts.

The felony conviction with their implications for employment and licensing are posed as warnings. Vicki wants to overturn her own conviction to set a

precedent for other cases in which political activists are defused with petty legal and political tactics. The Vicki Gabriner Defense Fund needs money. Support and information. You can contact them at P.O. Box 5533, Atlanta, GA 30307.

*Editorial Note: Material for this article is from Susan Wells, a member of the Vicki Gabriner Defense Committee.*

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has the following films by and about women available for rental or sale:

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 "SUPERNUMERARIES" by Sandy Smith  
 "A COMEDY IN SIX UNNATURAL ACTS" and  
 "I'M NOT ONE OF 'EM" and  
 "HOME MOVIE" by Jan Oxenberg  
 "WE'RE ALIVE" by Joint Productions  
 "WISHFULFILMING" by Santa Cruz Women's Media Collective  
 "MENSES" by Barbara Hammer  
 "AND THEN THERE WERE" by Linda Klosky  
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## MASSACHUSETTS MAY GET REFERENDUM

If an odd looking bill goes through the Massachusetts state legislature this fall, that state's gays may well be looking at a referendum in 1978. Boston Rep. Elaine Noble's gay employment rights bill is expected to pass this fall. Noble however had to accept a compromise rider called a "non-binding referendum." This means the passed bill will automatically go to a referendum — but the referendum is not binding. If this sounds odd, and perhaps not entirely above board, it is. Legally speaking the legislators do not have to rescind the bill even if the referendum goes against it, but supporters suspect that if gays lose the referendum the legislators will find some loophole to kill the bill. In a July speech made in Denver, Noble said if the bill goes to referendum she will personally lead the pro-gay campaign.

\* \* \*

In related legislative developments, the California gay employment bill sponsored by Art Agnos has been delayed in committee where it will remain until the January 1978 legislative session. The California anti-gay teachers bill sponsored by Senator John Briggs is in a similar position.

## BAD DAYS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

**Texas:** a bill in the House would ban homosexual organizations from state-supported universities.

**Pennsylvania:** the Senate passed a bill which would ban gays from "sensitive" state jobs, including law enforcement and mental health positions.

**New Hampshire:** a bill which would prohibit gays from "consorting in public" is now before the legislature.

**Arkansas:** penalties have been reinstituted for same-sex sexual relations when only two years ago they were removed.

**California and Florida:** a bill to ban same sex marriages was passed.

**Arizona:** the state legislature is about to pass legislation which would ban all sex between members of the same sex.

**Oklahoma:** the state senate passed a resolution praising Anita Bryant.

## GOOD NEWS

**Missouri:** State House recently passed a bill reducing the "crime" of homosexuality from a felony to a misdemeanor. The Senate is still working on it.

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FUTURE ISSUES SPRING '77 *Ethnic Dykes*, copy deadline Feb. 1st. SUMMER '77 *Animals*, copy deadline May 1st.



# UP NOTES For Our Side

The way it was: there had been an accident and a woman moved through the crowd and started to kneel by the victim, only to be pushed aside by a man who said, "Step back — I've had a course in first aid." The woman stood a moment and watched the man fuss around, then tapped him on the shoulder and said, "When you get to the part about calling a doctor I'm here."

(PG&E Newsletter)

**And will be again:** Things are a little different among the Khasi people in the tribal state of Meghalaya. A newly-wed husband moves into his wife's home and takes her family name. Once there, he can't count on being secure in his marriage until his wife gives birth to a baby girl. If only boys are born to the couple, he is eventually asked to leave.

(HerSay)

**LATE FLASH:** Noted pianist Liberace and Anita Bryant had the same agent until Liberace told his last month, "You can have my \$50,000 or Bryant's \$5,000 — not both." The agent dropped Bryant.

(Editor's Note: If you see some "up notes for our side" happening in your city, please share them with us.)

## IDAHO GIVES BRYANT 'SMALL POTATO' WELCOME

**Sun Valley, ID** — According to a poll of teenage beauty contestants from across the country, Anita Bryant is "America's greatest American." Some 3500 young women voted in the contest in which Bryant outpolled Jerry Lewis, Bob Hope, and President Carter.

Bryant's campaign against gay rights is still causing blinks for the singer, however. 16 sign-carrying demonstrators shouting "Anita go home, leave Idaho" demonstrated briefly at the condominium where she is vacationing.

When the demonstrators arrived at the Sun Valley Idaho home, they chanted for several minutes and told newspeople that they wanted to let Bryant know she wasn't welcome in Idaho.

"They've done this wherever I've performed. They're trying to hurt my livelihood," Bryant said angrily after the demonstration. "No more comment, please, my family's upset enough."



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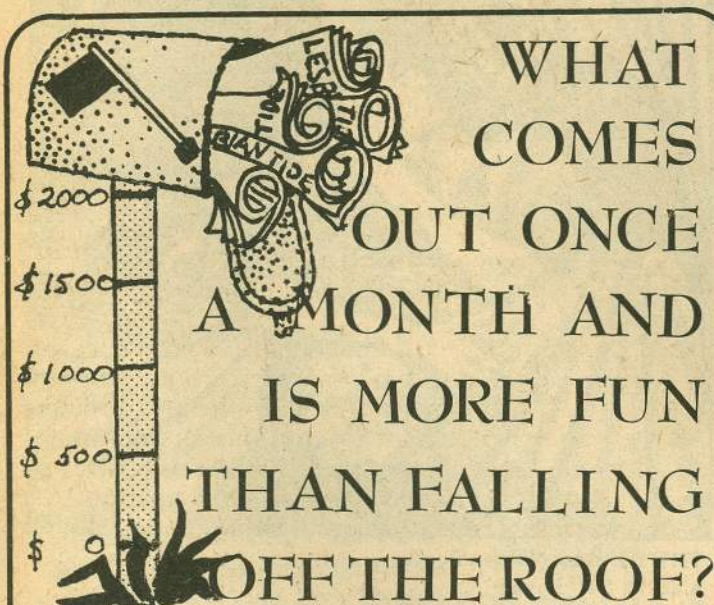
### Circulation Growing

Topics of discussion at our annual seminar included reviewing our internal structure and our goals. The staff unanimously agreed the present structure of a collective editorial board, a managing editor, and departmental autonomy, was working very well. Last January we set goals of raising our circulation by 1/3, paying staff and writers, and beginning a promotional bulk campaign. In the last six month period we have

raised our circulation by 1/3 and we have begun to pay staff and writers. We have tripled our subscription rate-per-month since 1976 and have begun a promotional bulk drive which we plan to continue for the remainder of the year. About 15 more bookstores are carrying us now, bringing our total outlets across country to about 80.

### Cross Country Tour

Two staff members are also planning a cross country tour next summer to set up an office in New York City, and either Seattle or San Francisco, so we achieve an even more national orientation in our coverage of events. The tour is planned for next May or July, further details will be printed. If you know lesbians interested in a part time job as office co-ordinators (we need a writer and an advertising agent) in those cities please contact us.



*The Lesbian Tide*, of course. But the Tide only comes out every other month, you say? Not if you have anything to say about it. Yes, friends, *The Lesbian Tide* could be arriving at your very door or bookstore every single month. How can you help? We're glad you asked that. All that stands between you and us is a mere \$2,000. With that amount we could absorb the initial expense of double printing, mailing, etc. bills. So send what you can to:

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### STAFF

Editorial & Political Collective: Shirl Buss, Jeanne Cordova, Sharon McDonald

Contributing Board Editor: Cheri Lesh and Kathy Proud.

Sports Editor: Lauren Bach

Circulation: Barbara Gehrke

Advertising: Jeanne Cordova

Graphics Consultant: Susan Carlin

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Production Crew (this issue): Melissa Moseley, Barbara Gehrke, Shirl Buss, Jeanne Cordova, Page Bradshaw

Thanks to Ivy Bottini for skills and knowledge shared in our Production Workshop.

Published by Tide Publications

### WHO WE ARE

*The Lesbian Tide* is a feminist lesbian publication financially supported by the community it serves. It is published by Tide Publications, and receives its political direction from The Editorial and Political Collective. We are produced by the pride and energies of a staff who are committed to one or more specific departments within the magazine. The staff is continually open to women who wish to become involved in journalism and communications or who see media as a vehicle for activism. The E&P Collective is open to staff members who have been with the magazine for six months and share a radical feminist perspective.



# Feminist, Gay Leaders Call for End to "Choice"?

by the Editorial and Political Collective

Remember the days when homosexuals used to plead for acceptance because, "We were born this way?" Remember the days when women had to literally beg, borrow and steal to get an abortion? Those days may be returning. And the return may be prompted, or at least encouraged, by leaders of gay and feminist movements.

At a July 18 "summit" meeting in Washington D.C., Ellie Smeal and Arlie Scott (President and Action V.P. of National NOW), Jean O'Leary and Bruce Voeller (Executive Directors of the National Gay Task Force), Jane McMichaels (Director, National Women's Political Caucus), Aryeh Neier (Executive Director, ACLU), Ruth Abrams (Executive Director, Women's Action Alliance), and Ruth Hinerfeld, (President, League of Women Voters) got together and suggested that "the gay movement and the women's movement need to assess carefully the risks and gains in further promotion of 'free choice' concepts such as the 'choice' to have an abortion and the 'choice' implied in the phrase 'sexual and affectional preference,' as distinct from the more innate character of 'orientations.'"

No, it's not you, reader, the statement quoted above is unclear. It was probably *intended* to be unclear. Because once you have read it through several times, its potential ramifications gradually come into focus.

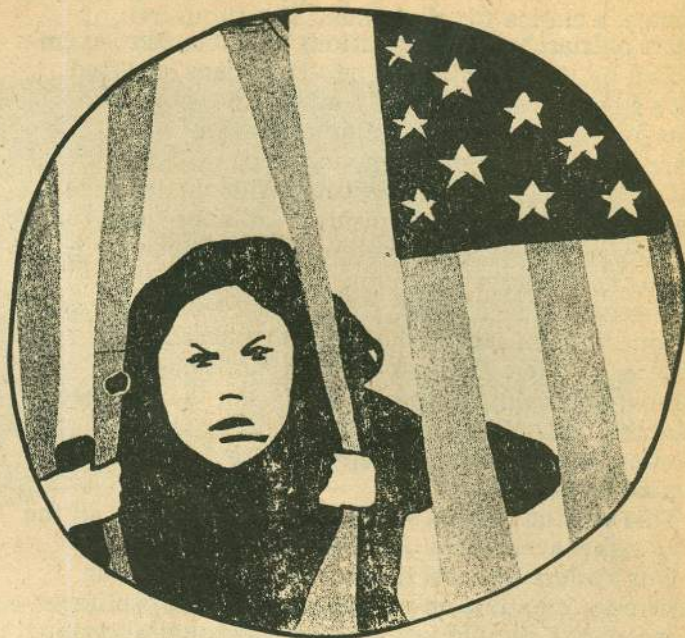
So what's wrong with presenting "gayness" as a matter of sexual orientation? Thousands of lesbians already believe their lesbianism IS a matter of orientation. "I was always gay, it just took me 30 years to find out!"

Perhaps the most fundamental tenet of radical feminism is the assertion that women have the right to control our own bodies. Women have the *right* to have children or not to have children, we have the *right to choose* who we take as our lovers. Many women who came to lesbianism through feminism saw for the first time in their lives that they had a choice. They chose to love women. To have defined lesbianism as only an orientation would have left those women straight. Lesbians who had felt victimized by their "orientation," discovered through feminism the opportunity to move from oppression to affirmation.

The statement appeared in a National Gay Task Force press release synthesizing the Washington meeting. To date, five news papers which reported the press release all omitted this crucial paragraph. One editor of a large gay paper said, "I guess we missed that."

*The Lesbian Tide* highlights this paragraph because we believe it is a new national policy being put forth by top leaders and organizations in our movement. In early August the national offices of N.O.W. asked all of their Lesbian Rights Task Forces across the country to consider changing their name back to "Sexuality and Lesbianism Task Force" or just "Sexuality Task Force." We believe this suggestion is potentially highly dangerous, reactionary and regressive.

What were our leaders thinking of when they sugges-



HERA

ted this change in policy? According to Susan Myers, from NGTF National Headquarters in New York, who explained on behalf of Ms. O'Leary and Voeller, it means, "presenting ourselves (gays) as having a sexual orientation gives homosexuality a *need* character that might have a better chance of acceptance with conservative legislators." Myers said she did not understand the reference to abortion and that she would investigate and inform us. Asked if NGTF is or will be officially acting upon its own recommendation Myers replied, "The matter is still being examined. There is no firm decision." Other representatives from that D.C. meeting could not be reached by press time.

The suggestion from our "leaders" that we'd make more political mileage in these regressive times if we didn't shout about "choice" is absurd. The assumption that we'd get more civil rights if we'd take-one-baby-step-back-into-the-closet is unsupported by historical comparisons or political analysis. Ask the survivors of the death-camps in Europe if the Nazis took pity on the Jews because they "were born that way." The history of every movement (black, peace, feminist, you name it) clearly shows that the power structure concedes to demands out of necessity and fear — not out of raised consciousness or a desire to make amends. If our leaders are trying to say that America is not ready to give us the right to control our own bodies, *The Lesbian Tide* agrees with this analysis. We share the same analysis of the problem, we differ on what tactics will bring about a solution. We haven't even got the ERA, self-determination is obviously a long way off. If we play "Daddy's little girl" with the power structure we will ensure that we never get the freedoms which are ours by birthright.

At a core level, this new national "suggestion" contradicts lesbian feminism itself. Our earliest documents are filled with the knowledge that lesbianism is "the rage of all women," the birthright of every

continued on page 22



## End to "Choice"?

continued from page 21

female, a choice for all women. For thousands of years patriarchal interpretations of lesbianism, exemplified by the teachings of neo-Freudians, asserted, "It's a character disorder. You've either got it, or you don't." As a result, millions of women who were married, had children, and slept with men were led to believe, "I haven't got it." With the feminist reinterpretation of lesbianism as "an alternative for all women," millions of heterosexual women were given the freedom to explore themselves politically and sexually. As a result, thousands *became* lesbians. As one woman said, "The moment I heard I had a choice . . . I left my husband." In addition to removing the guts of radical feminism, the suggested new line ABANDONS hundreds of thousands of women to the patriarchal ethic of pre-determined sexuality (no choice).

This erosion cannot be repaired by obtaining all the civil rights available in America.

Our leaders also feel that we should soften our insistence on abortion-on-demand to an appeal for "necessity." Should we begin to insist that abortion is a matter of necessity, the next question, obviously, is what constitutes necessity? In case our leaders missed it, the legislators of this country defined "necessity" last spring when Congress prohibited the use of federal funds for abortion except for the necessity occasioned by rape, incest or grave-threat-to-the-mother's-life. In short, "necessity" *has been* defined. It has been defined by men. And, what a surprise — they seem to have come up with the same definition they had before we started the Women's Movement! If we leave the front of "free-choice" and return to the rear-guard of necessity, we return to 1965.

Any return to allowing this government to "permit" women abortions "when necessary" or "upon request" leaves women TOTALLY vulnerable to the power of men to define what is necessary for women. We suggest our leaders would be better off reading the basic documents of feminism and talking with rank and file women who have given their trust and hopes to a movement for *women* — not legislators. *The Lesbian Tide* clearly recognizes that lesbians in America are being pushed into critical times of hardship. Yet we assert even more clearly, that we will meet intimidation with political intensity, we will meet denial with woman-patient durability and dyke-outraged determination, we will meet fear with faith in our right to love each other. *Only* in these things do we see no choice.



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## Lesbian Tide

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US. . . . .

As *The Lesbian Tide* celebrates its sixth birthday, we are proud to have shared the news, politics, and feelings of lesbian feminists throughout America and Europe. We plan to be around for at least six more years, or until such time as our oppression is lifted and we appear in the pages of all newspapers as free women.

We are happy to report that the internal workings of the staff have seldom been better. The financial outlook is solid, stable and growing, as is *The Tide* herself.

After using our investigative reporting skills to document all the *other* inhabitants of Lesbian Nation, we are now turning our talents upon each other to give you some little known facts about the women behind *The Tide*. Hope you enjoy meeting us as much as we have enjoyed meeting all of you through your letters, articles, and valuable feedback.

With love from *The Tide* Staff

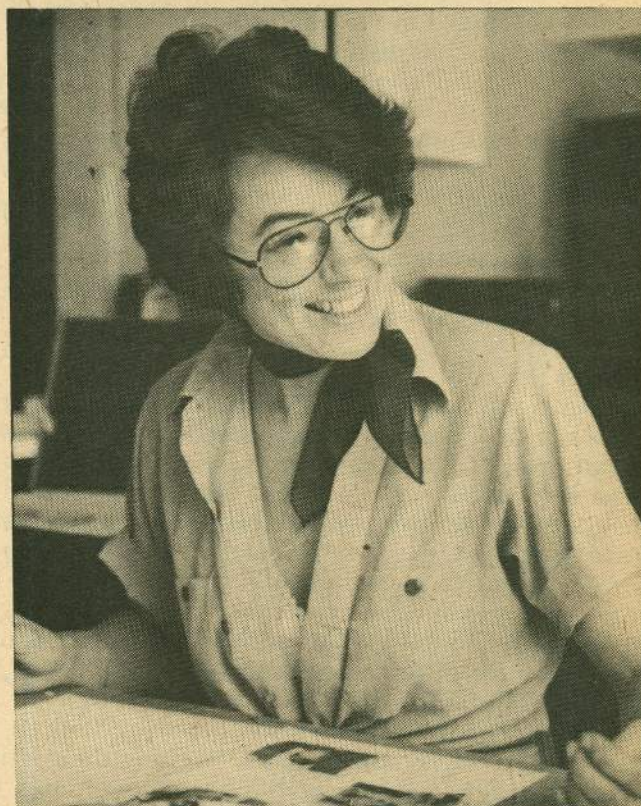


photo by EK Waller

Barbara Gehrke (Production, Circulation Co-ordinator): In 1963 Barbara and her "questionable" friends stonewalled their way out of dishonorable discharges from the Navy by refusing to talk. A decade later Bg was shouting in the streets about lesbian liberation. For the last four years that shouting has taken the form of editing, bookkeeping, and "laying-out" on *The Tide*. Sliding through town in her dented blue cadillac, the former farm woman from Iowa says, "Selina (her car) is my best friend. I'll never give her up!" With the publication of this issue Bg celebrates the 35th time she has helped bring *The Tide* to you.



# Celebrates Sixth Birthday!!



photo by EK Waller

Jeanne Cordova (Founder/Publisher, Editorial and Political Collective, Financial Manager). Cut-throat ping pong player ("Wanna make that 2 out of 3?"), Jeanne is the only writer whose work is entirely recognizable by her typing style alone ("it Is n ott!"). Friendly and spirited softball player ("Come on, Amazons!"), grouchy but skillfull softball coach ("Come on, Amazons!"). TV novel addict ("Rich Man Poor Man got me hooked!"). Keeps books that would make Silvia Porter cry — with envy. Beneath her tough exterior lies a tough interior; she is a consistent victor in the Battle of Burnout. As such she has become an L.A. movement fixture, but not a static one ("A moving target is harder to hit."). She is a survivor.



Cheri Lesh, (Editorial Board) whose real (Witch) name is Cerridwen Fallingstar is Priestess of the HodgePodge Coven. Triple Scorpio, radical hedonist, feminist writer. She believes in five basic principles: birth, sex, death, magic and freedom. Her favorite word is YES.



photo by EK Waller

Sharon McDonald (Editorial and Political Collective). Sharon, "slow but sure," strives for clarity, accuracy, and notoriety in her loving documentation of the foibles and frustrations of the feminist process. "Puff-piece McDonald" is trying to upgrade her style with weightier subject matter and moderate courage. Fantasizes writing the Great American Dyke Play and is a closet Carol Burnett enthusiast. Her emotional well-being depends on a regular supply of chocolate, lesbian company, and chocolate. She eats white bread and is not ashamed.



photo by EK Waller

Shirl Buss (Editorial and Political Collective, Graphics Co-ordinator). Known for her public stand against the evils of couplism, "Sharp Shirl" is currently "in struggle" against the creeping pleasures of domestication. Videotape maker and artist, she thrives on community gossip, claiming to "hear all, tell none." When she's not teasing stubborn Tide staffers about their sugar consumption she can be found in the ice cream cone line at the supermarket. Carpenter (for a living), softball player (for fun), and loyal friend (for love). Shirl brings her hyperactive energy to the Tide as writer, editor, and tireless lesbian chauvinist nag ("No boys in this magazine!").



## Updates On Custody

by Kathy Proud

In Michigan, Jacqueline Stamper was awarded custody of her two daughters, ending 10 weeks of court hearings in what became one of the longest custody battles in Michigan court history. Though there were no restrictions placed on the mother, the judge did say that he was not pleased with either parent. The husband will appeal.

In Denver, Donna Levy, the former lover of a deceased woman, has won custody of the woman's 7-year old daughter. The two women had jointly raised the child until their separation. After that Donna still visited and spent time with the child. The mother's sister and brother-in-law had taken custody of the child after the mother's death last July, and refused to let Donna visit. Donna won permanent custody of the 7-year old in late June.

### In Process

Margaret Miller has been fighting for custody of her 11 year old adopted daughter Gillion that has taken them to court in Michigan seven times and they're now preparing another appeal. Margaret asks for lesbian community support "not only economically but also in a political sense. I've given a lot to the community and now I'd like them to recognize something that I need." A Lesbian Mothers' Defense




Fund account has been set up in the Ann Arbor Feminist Federal Credit Union, 508 E. William, Ann Arbor, MI 48108.

Gail Gordon in Vermont writes about her case "as a blatant example of the oppression of minority groups and those choosing alternative lifestyles." She appeals to feminists across the country for support in form of money, skills or useful contacts. You can reply to Lesbian Defense Fund, P.O. Box 4, Essex Jct. Vermont 05452.

### Organizing

Francie Wyland of Wages Due Lesbians Toronto has published a pamphlet called *Motherhood, Lesbianism, and Child Custody*. She feels the pamphlet is part of their contribution to the struggle of lesbian wimmin "to have and keep our children." It is one of the first writings on this subject in North America and can be ordered from: Lesbian Women from the Wages for Housework Campaign, P.O. Box 5207, San Francisco, CA 94101.

Groups of wimmin have formed across the country to develop some means of educating people about lesbian mother custody cases. Wimmin in Ann Arbor Michigan Lesbian Mothers' Defense Fund suggest some things to do. Introduce yourself to a lesbian mother at an event and tell her you are glad she came — meet her child. Stop putting pressure on lesbians to live a "politically correct" lesbian lifestyle (which may exclude children). Offer to take part in child care so a lesbian mother can go out on her own. Raise

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expenses of a Califia newsletter. Arrangements for  
child care must be made before Sept. 24. Call Shari  
Schulz for further information — 397-4976.





issues of child care at social and political events, meetings and other places where wimmin with children may be participating.

#### New Rulings

A New Jersey judge ruled that a man cannot refuse to allow his former wife to visit their children just because she is a lesbian. Judge Donald Collester of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court ruled that the rights of homosexual parents are "the same as those of heterosexual parents."

*The Blade*

The Florida State Senate passed a bill designed to prohibit gays from adopting children. One Senator said that the bill should be amended to declare as unfit parents those labeled as child molesters, mentally disordered, sexual offenders, spouse beaters, prostitutes, racketeers, communists, outside agitators, damn Yankees, and politicians. He stated, "You might think this is a facetious amendment, but it's not; it is only as ridiculous as the Bill itself."

*FGLN*

**Lobotomies:** The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) has approved the use of federal funds for lobotomies to be performed on prisoners, mental patients, and children.

*MR*


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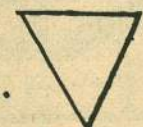
#### National Resource File

An excellent resource list for lesbian mothers has been compiled by Mary K. Blackmon. The list is being distributed as a supplement to Iris Films' documentary on custody for lesbian mothers. It includes national listings of groups, legal counselling, sources of emotional support, classes, hotlines, research for testimony in court cases, expert witnesses, videotapes, documentation of cases all over the country, and a bibliography. Included in the catalogue are two resource centers that contain further files on the subject. For copies contact: Iris Films, P.O. box 26463, L.A. 90026 or phone (213) 483-5793. This pamphlet is free to all lesbian mothers who need it, but a \$1 donation is asked of all who can afford it so that more copies can be printed and free copies can remain available.

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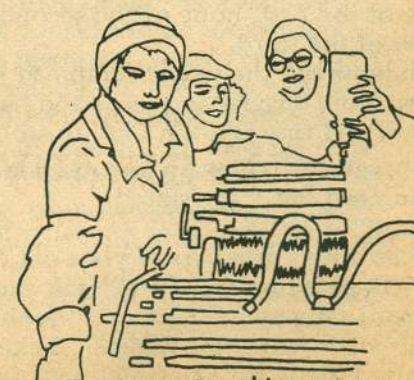


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## Dykes on Bikes

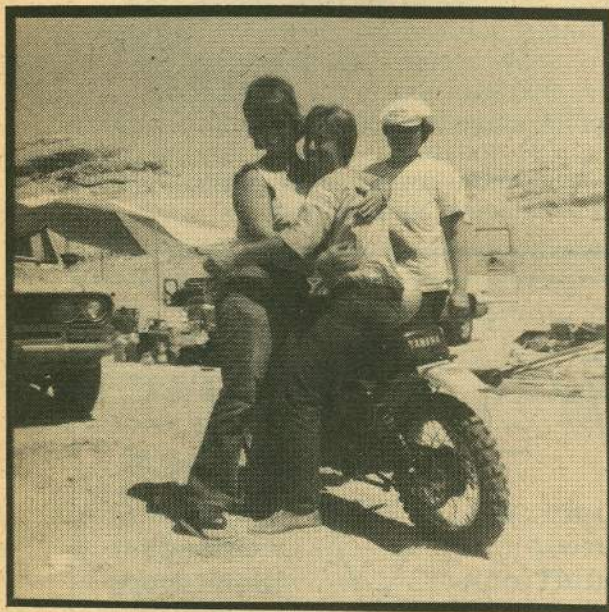


photo by Jeanne Cordova

Sisterhood keeps it together in the 100 degree heat of the California desert.

by Jeanne Cordova

"I think I'm going to faint," I announced to my blurred lover sitting across the table. They do it gracefully on TV, but I was just going to fold up and die.

Why did we come to this life forsaken pit? Memorial Day weekend in the Mojave Desert. Dumb. Hilda had prophesied, "There'll be no refrigerator, no TV, no smog! We'll just sit and fry!" But I wanted to get back to my roots. Rough it with a dyke motorcycle and jeep club! Dirt ride! Let go of civilized comforts! Get back to the good old gay days of drinking, sex and hanging out! . . . In the 99° heat I'd done too little of the first, none of the second, and entirely too much of the third.

An hour ago the whole camp had jumped on their bikes, dune buggies and jeeps and headed for the distant distant and tiny Blu-Inn Cafe to stock up on supplies. Bobbi sat down next to me observing my vacated eyes. "You need salt," she stated.

"Salt?"

"Salt. Sun's dried up all your salt."

My fingers fumbled for the salt shaker.

"Not that way . . . here . . ." Bobbi extended a small bottle of yellow tablets. "Take two."

Only pride in my fainting tough dyke image kept me from blurting out, "I don't want any salt. I want

my mama. I want to go home." I popped the salt.

"We're going to find some parts for Barbara's bike," Bobbi grabbed her helmet and turned to go. "Pick you up later."

Maybe, maybe not I pouted to myself.

The first day had been hard on me. One of the women had loaned her bike to me and as I swaggared about collecting a helmet and gloves, I tried to pretend I "rode dirt" all the time. Actually I had once. . . nine years ago. I'd broken the three smallest toes on my left foot, my Honda 90 was never the same.

"Be careful, the tail swishes," the owner yelled as I took off with an appropriate burst.

The ass (of the bike!) did attempt to swivel out from under me whenever I hit sand, and I was "forced" to stop in the middle of several dunes no real dyke would be caught dead *walking* her bike through, but my only serious problem was making an unscheduled stop half way up a 45° incline. As I paused to contemplate my awkward situation I thought of just getting off the bike and letting it flop back down the hill. Advantage: I wouldn't get hurt. Disadvantage: the bike might.

Before abandoning ship and walking to the campsite in ungracious defeat, I decided upon one last effort. Slowly I released the brakes and allowed the bike and I to creep downhill backwards. "If there's a ledge or big rock, we've had it," I whispered to my bike.



In jeeps, on bikes, with dune buggies and daring, we own the desert for a weekend!



A few hours later another woman split an axle while riding her dune buggy (which was four wheels, an engine and five metal bars). Nora of course carried some spare axles around as conscientiously as I had thought to bring my pen and paper. Incredulously I watched as she and her friends dragged the heavy metal tools and parts out to the buggy and matter-of-factly sat in the burning sand for a five hour repair job. Others brought continuous food and water to them in a display of sisterhood.

In order to catch the full gritty flavor of these exercises of skill, trauma, and comradeship, you have to keep in mind that all this is taking place in the grossest of 100° heat. The desert by day can be vicious. The pervasive glare of a cloudless sky, the saturating heat arising from night's bare virgin sands. Sitting in the tiny cafe, afraid to leave the air conditioned room to return to camp, I well understood how this land could kill. The terror of being lost out here was itself enough to bring madness.

But as Hilda pointed out, we weren't lost, mad or dead. . . . yet. So perhaps we should stay . . . and leave first thing in the morning.

We awoke to Kathy's proposal that we take a jeep ride with her. Well, what the hell? I reasoned. This time I wouldn't be driving, so nothing could happen.

"Put some tin foil on your head before we go," Kathy called out as Hilda and I climbed into the jeep. "Tin foil?" We looked at each other.

"Turn the glossy side out, it reflects the heat off," Kathy explained.

"Doesn't bouncing around with tin foil on your head look pretty silly?" I asked.

"Better silly than fried."

If you like being jolted around like a tomato in a tossed salad, we had a great time. Kathy sought the steepest hill, being proud of her jeep, and Hilda and I sought the metal grip bars, being scared to death.

"By the way," Kathy cautioned, "If we should roll, don't grab anything on the outside of the jeep. Duck and hold your legs."

Pointing to a large sharp hill ahead of us I yelled, "you're not going to try that one, are you?"

Three other male driven jeeps sat at the foot of the steep hill in question. As they backed off to make room for us, Kathy gunned the engine and we flew up — and straight down. The male jeeps stared. Women had done the feat as they discussed their courage.

But the hill had apparently taken the best Kathy's jeep had to offer. A half hour later, as we were making a second attempt to climb another huge dune, something popped and the jeep stopped dead. Not being well versed in the parts of an engine I can only describe the disaster by saying, if you took a hundred heavy bolts and nuts and put them in a metal container and put it on a blender. . . . that's what the engine sounded like.

Sound effects aside, there we were in the middle of nowhere, 100° heat, stuck. Kathy went to sit by the engine. Hilda paced around and around the stuck jeep. I clamped my tin foil on tighter and wondered how many miles one could walk in this heat before passing out. Time dragged.

There was a bike on the horizon! It was coming toward us! Nora had come to our rescue.

"Thought you all might need a beer!" she smiled

*continued on page 38*

## Falcons Expel Lesbians

On June 28, three gay women from the Women's Center softball team who were attending a softball training camp sponsored by the Connecticut Falcons were forced to leave the camp by Falcon management because they were lesbians.

Lavonne Cornett, Gail Tannenbaum, and Terri Mohum had paid the full cost of the training camp and had travelled to Meriden, Conn. to attend the camp. They were "asked to leave" after participating in 2½ days out of the scheduled 6. John Salerno, general manager of the Falcons, said that he had to ask the D.C. women to leave because of their "conduct";



Susan Carlin

that the women had been "imposing" their lifestyle on others; that they were "more open" about their lifestyle than people will accept in Meriden, Conn. For these reasons, said Salerno, Joan Joyce (51% owner and Falcon star pitcher) and Brenda Reilly (coaching manager) decided the D.C. women could not remain at the training camp.

From Salerno's remarks to the D.C. women it is apparent that the management found their behavior to be too blatant and an imposition upon those attending the camp. In other words, people could "tell" that they were lesbians. Although Salerno would not state exactly what behavior was objectionable, the D.C. women have identified behaviors which the management may have considered an imposition: one of the women was reading *Lesbian Images*; one woman leaned against another in the bleachers; two of the women took a 5 minute shower together at a room in the Holiday Inn; one woman massaged the temples of another to help a migraine headache; two women shared a pillow while sleeping on an opened-up sleeping bag; and, finally, the women had unshaven legs.

Events which occurred at the Holiday Inn seemed to be the major issue. Three young women had agreed to let two of the D.C. women share their room for a night because no other room was available in the

*continued on page 38*



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by Country

*Lesbian Concentrate, A Lesbiananthology of Songs and Poems*, Olivia Records, \$6.00.



This album was put together in six short weeks in response to the attack on gay people by the Save Our Children campaign. *Lesbian Concentrate* is political and cultural, as well as entertaining. It is an affirmation of who we are and where we're going. The album brings together all lesbian lifestyles so that we can struggle for and with each other, as a unit, instead of separately. This collection of songs and poems touches the lesbian in the bar, the feminist lesbian, the lesbian mother and hopefully those women who are lesbians in the closet.

This lesbiananthology breaths our strengths and explodes with our anger. It states, many times over, we are here to stay! In her song *Don't Pray for Me*, Mary Watkins (Singing to 'Nita) proudly announces, "We're coming out to walk in the sunlight. We're coming out to fight for right." Debbie Lempke lets you know we're *Gay and Proud*. She openly declares "ain't you glad we finally found each other." The political statements just pour from this album.

As women, we have been denied our culture. As lesbians, we have been told we have no culture. We've been ignored. *A History of Lesbianism* destroys that myth. Judy Grahn reads her poem with a belief, an enthusiasm that can't be ignored. Because our culture, our history, has never been told, we lack examples of lesbian relationships. We are making our own examples and the learning process is often painful. *No Hiding Place* echoes the fear we sometimes feel when "something new and good has happened to you." *Nina*, *Sweet Women* and *Kahlua Mama* sing of the many different ways women relate to women.

Olivia Records is donating part of the proceeds to the Lesbian Mothers' National Defense Fund. It is time to Save OUR Children. Custody cases are outrageously expensive. LMNDF helps financially when they can. These proceeds will help them help us and our children.

The amount of work put into this album was unmeasurable. The artists, engineers and the collective members produced a powerful and delightful album. *Lesbian Concentrate* is definitely a Lesbiananthology of Songs and Poems that leave you spellbound. Look for it!

## The Return of the Fates

by Cheri Lesh

*In Benevento a nut-tree stands  
And thither by night from many lands,  
Over the waters and on the wind,  
Come Witches flying of every kind,  
On goats and boars and bears and cats,  
Some upon broomsticks, some like bats,  
Howling, hurtling, hurrying all,  
Come to the tree for the Witches' ball.*

— Traditional Italian Legend

As tradition dictates, there will be a Witches' ball this Hallows — but you can leave your broomstick at home and carpool instead. Once again, the indomitable Susan B. Anthony Coven No. 1 will Priestess the ALL HALLOWS season by staging "The Rise of the Fates," women's passion play and Masked Ball in the Woman's Building on October 28, 29, and 30. Watch the triple Fates battle it out with the male thought forms and cheer while the evil spirits of patriarchal religions get what their own doom-weaving has brought upon them. Delight in the presence of some of our favorite foremothers; Amelia Earhart, Emmeline Pankhurst, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and, of course, Susan B. Anthony. Sigh with passion at the scene where the shy Virgin-in-Chains meets Colette and becomes far more liberated than she ever bargained for. Most of all, revel in the blend of vengeance, merriment and hope that the passion play has to offer.

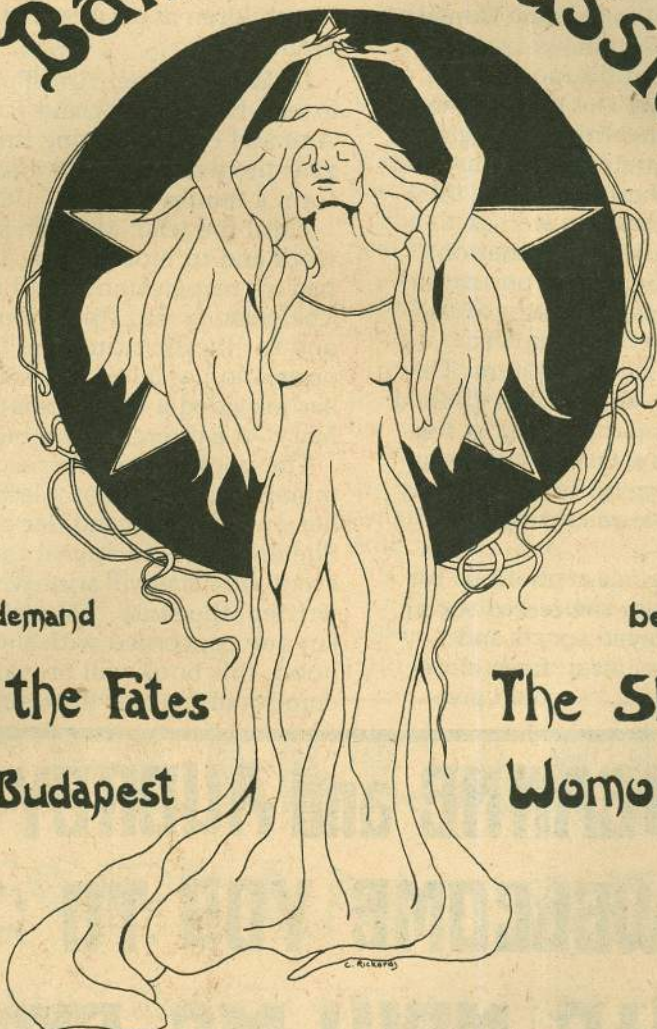
This ALL HALLOWS festival will be a fundraiser for a SHRINE OF WOMON DIVINE, a sacred mountaintop the Susan B. Anthony coven hopes to buy and consecrate to the Goddess and her daughters. Between the Orange Juice Hate Queen of Florida and the anti-abortion forces in the Congress, women have never needed the intervention of the Fates more. Help raise energy to disperse patriarchy and raise funds for the SHRINE OF WOMON DIVINE at this most sacred time of the year.

*This event is a benefit to raise funds for a shrine to The Woman Divine. Women's religion must have a manifestation, a place where spiritual exercise can take place, a shrine of our own. Imagine, there is no temple to the Goddess in the entire world. They are all laid in ruins, and so is woman's status, lifestyle, economy and civil rights. Proceeds from the Passion Play and Masked Ball will go to buying property for a Woman's Shrine.*

— Z. Budapest



the  
**Witches Second Annual Halloween  
Masked Ball and Passion Play**



by popular demand

**The Rise of the Fates**  
by  
**Zsuzsanna Budapest**

benefit for

**The Shrine of  
Woman Divine**

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**children's halloween party by the la. men's collective**



# Custody's Last Stand

by Terry Wolverton

*By Her Own Admission: A Lesbian Mother's Fight to Keep Her Son*, by Gifford Guy Gibson with the collaboration of Mary Jo Risher, Doubleday, 1977, \$8.95.

On December 26th, 1975, the Dallas County Domestic Relations Court ruled to remove nine-year-old Richard Risher from the custody of his mother, Mary Jo Risher, an avowed lesbian. The trial became the first case of national focus concerning the rights of a lesbian mother to raise her children. Feminist and gay groups rallied in support of Mary Jo, raising the national consciousness about the issue as well as changing Risher's own perceptions of her situation.

*By Her Own Admission* is a sympathetic portrayal of the woman behind the headlines, the story of the struggle of Mary Jo Risher to assert her rights to equal justice against a homophobic legal system. The narrative, written by Gifford Guy Gibson and gleaned from thorough interviewing of all participants in the case and from the transcripts of the trial, provides an understanding of the events leading up to the custody suit and an empathy for the people caught up in the drama.

As a young girl, Mary Jo always felt attractions for women, but repressed them because she feared social disapproval. In high school she played sports and was an excellent student, but shied away from close friendships with other girls, thinking "I would give

myself away." She dated boys in high school and when she attended the Arkansas Baptist School of Nursing.

In 1956 she married Doug Risher. With him she had two sons, Jimmy and Richard, and when the Rishers divorced in 1971, Mary Jo gained custody of both children.

After the divorce, Mary Jo supported herself and her children as a nurse and attended school in the evening.

In 1973 she met Ann Forman and they became lovers. Both Jimmy and Richard got along well with Ann and enjoyed doing things together. Later that year the women decided to move in together and form a family unit.

Until the trial, Mary Jo was still in the closet at work and to most of the straight community. She had no recognition of lesbianism as a political issue. The custody suit forced her into a public position and for the first time she began to examine her oppression as a lesbian and as a woman. The struggle has provided a transformation in consciousness for Mary Jo Risher; she has become a fighter.

The book allows the reader to experience the determination and pain of a lesbian mother torn between her own identity and her devotion to her children. She continues to appeal the decision, convinced that eventually she will win. While not especially well written, the story is absorbing and inspiring; to anyone concerned with the issue of lesbian motherhood, this book will provide valuable insight and emotional fuel for the struggle.

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# In Edible Detail

by Terry Wolverton

Nancy Fried, a dough sculptor and Los Angeles lesbian artist has been up all night as usual, riveted to her work. 'Work' is the scenic sculptural plaques, just large enough to hold in both hands, which she forms out of bread dough, bakes in her oven, and then paints painstakingly and extravagantly.

Dough sculpture?

"I started doing these for Christmas decorations," Fried recalls. "My roommates and I got the recipe out of some magazine — 'What-To-Do-For-Christmas-Ideas'"

As she is talking, my eyes stray to the new works, the product of her latest marathon endeavors and clearly personifying a new phase in Fried's development.

The new pieces are lavish and sensual, portraying a celebration of lesbian womanhood in glorious fantasy environments. Each work is elaborately painted in lush greens and purples and metallic gold.

The scenes are explicitly lesbian; each plaque displays a woman, either by herself or with another woman, and all the figures are nude. The women are voluptuous, more realistically sculpted than one would think possible out of flour and water, with soft, curving and inviting bodies.

All the figures in Nancy Fried's pieces dwell in ornate settings, luscious rooms rich with satins, velvets and brocades, all created by patterns and textures in the dough.



photo by EK Waller

"With my work and with my environment I want the sense that every inch has been taken care of, every part has been touched. I really want to show the beauty of lesbian life and lesbian lifestyle. I want to show the things that have always been hidden. I want lesbians to know that we have a strong culture — we are proud of what we are."

The marvelous sense of detail is captured in scenes that depict women making love, a lone woman masturbating, women in their homes in incredible detail: a tiny candle burns on an altar, a woman reads a copy of the latest *Chrysalis* magazine. Each sculpture is drawn out of her own life experiences — scenes of women lovers, women painting and hammering, playing baseball or smoking a joint.

The dough sculptures made by Fried embody many of the characteristics that define feminist art. She has reclaimed and transformed a traditional woman's skill, the art of working in bread dough.

"I use all kitchen tools," she confides to me. "Rolling pin, toothpicks and a garlic press."

She is also among those artists who are beginning to push the boundaries of a "lesbian aesthetic."

## CELEBRATE

## LESBIAN ART

THE NATALIE BARNEY COLLECTIVE PRESENTS:

### "LESBIAN FANTASIES"

SCULPTURES IN DOUGH BY NANCY FRIED

SEPTEMBER 17TH 8 — 10 P.M.



photo by EK Waller

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DRINKING

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9PM — 2AM

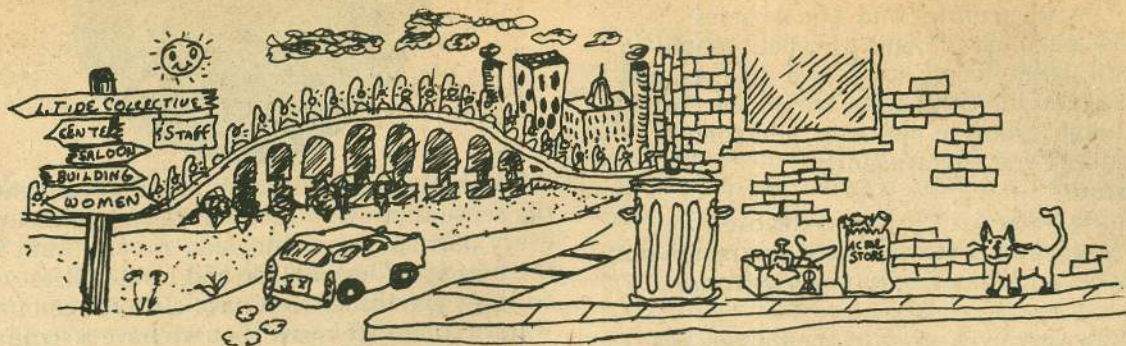
AT



THE WOMAN'S BUILDING 1727 N. SPRING ST. LOS ANGELES



# community focus



## COME ALL YE SONGSTERS!

The L.A. Women's Community Chorus will be re-opening for new members on Oct. 9th at 3 p.m. at the YWCA, 10936 Santa Monica Blvd. All women welcome. For more information call 478-8308.

## OLIVIA RECORDS MOVING TO OAKLAND

Olivia Records, the Los Angeles based national women's recording company, is moving to Oakland, California. The move, which will be made in October, is prompted by the company's crowded condition in Los Angeles and better financial opportunities in Northern California. "Right now we're in two houses and paying rent on five separate apartments," explained collective member Robin Brooks. Since coming to L.A. in May 1975, Olivia has grown to the point that it's now financially advantageous to buy property rather than rent. "In Oakland we can get much larger facilities for much less money than in L.A." Brooks explained. Olivia wants to set up its own studio. The collective has not determined an address at this time but is looking for space in the Lake Merit district of Oakland. Asked how they felt about leaving Los Angeles, Brooks replied, "We're not looking forward to it because we've had a wonderful time here personally, politically and

economically. The Los Angeles women's community has been entirely supportive." The move will be gradual and Olivia will keep a Los Angeles office until the end of the year.

## ACLU WANTS LESBIAN CASES

The Lesbian Rights Committee and Gay Rights Chapter of A.C.L.U. is actively involved in efforts to assist anyone who has been discriminated against because of their homosexuality, especially in the area of job or housing discrimination and child custody cases involving a lesbian mother. We need any information and all the help you can supply. Call us by dialing H-O-M-O-S-E-X or 657-1948.

## WITCHY PLAY NEEDS ACTORS

Halloween Benefit — Play and Masked Ball — to raise a shrine for wimmin will be held at the Woman's Building. Tryouts for the play begin Sept. 1st. There are fifteen character parts available, so all the community's closet actresses can have a shot at it. There are also many non-acting positions for wimmin who enjoy being a part of a production. Tryouts and sign-ups for production work will be held at the Alcoholism Center for Women, 1147 South Alvarado St., L.A. on Sept 1st at 7:30 p.m.

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WOMEN ON WHEELS brings to Los Angeles a unique women's theatre collective, LILITH, in *Moonlighting*, a moving and humorous play exploring the struggles of women working. *Moonlighting* will be performed October 1st and 2nd (see ad).

women's theatre events happening in LA:

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DAVE BERMAN, *The Evening Outlook*

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DAN SULLIVAN, *The LA Times*

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For information & reservations call 483-0522

Cost: MOONLIGHTING — \$3.00 WORKSHOP — donation



## classified ads

**JOB:** (Health) Administrative Assistant wanted at the Westside Women's Clinic. 30-40 hrs. wk. Salary: approximately \$4.00 hr. Fundraising, publicity, training skills necessary. Also, previous experience in Women's health care and women's liberation movement essential. Job requires self motivation and self direction. Call Kate McDonough at 450-2191.

**ALCOHOLISM:** Gay women who want help with a drinking problem, we have gay counselors for you. Call San Fernando Valley Alcoholism Council at 997-0414.

**SELF-HELP SOUL HEALING** class beginning Sept. 25. For lesbian women who are fed up with straight shrinks and looking for an alternative. Call Judy Freespirit at 829-4165 for information and reservations.

### ART AND DANCING AT WOMAN'S BUILDING

**DANCER,** Terril Maguire, will perform a program of 5 dances, Sept. 1 & 2. 8 p.m. \$2.50.

**DANCE** Benefit for the IWY Support Coalition sponsored by Womanenergy. Sept. 10. 9:30 p.m. \$2.50.

**FALL THEATER SERIES** begins with actress Beatrice Manley's one-woman piece based on Molly Bloom from James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Sept. 16. 8:30 p.m. \$3.00/\$3.50 members.

**NATALIE BARNEY** Lesbian Art Project presents Nancy Fried's "Lesbian Fantasies" exhibition of sculptures in dough, followed by disco dance at Val's Cafe, the Building's new restaurant. Sept. 17. \$1.50. 8 p.m.

**ISADORA DUNCAN,** a one-woman theater piece written and performed by Kres Mersky, Sept. 30. 8 p.m. \$3.00 / \$2.50 members.

**OUTRAGEOUS** skits entitled "The Codfish Ball," performed by Kres Mersky, Oct. 1. 8 p.m., \$3.00/\$2.50 members.

**FEMINIST ATTORNEY,** Bobette Fleishman-Greiff, has opened an office at the Building. Specialty, civil litigation, family law, etc.

### WOMONSPACE EVENTS

**POTLUCK & OPEN STAGE:** Friday, Sept. 16. Womonspace will sponsor a potluck dinner 7 p.m. and an Open Stage 8:30 p.m. Bring food or drink to share. Women interested in sharing poetry, music, dance, or any other performance are welcome. \$1.00 donation. Please call 396-0054 for more information.

**BASIC BODY WORK** class for women: Women who want to learn fundamental techniques for relieving tension and bringing awareness to the body without having to make a large commitment of time or money. Sat. Sept. 10 & 17. 1 to 3. \$12 for both sessions. No women turned away for lack of funds. Call Jane Lazar at 399-0485 to pre-register or for more info.

**GARAGE SALE** Benefit: for Womonspace. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the parking lot. Sat. Sept. 24. Donations of saleable items gladly accepted. Call 396-0054 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

### Playwrights Wanted

"Theatre of the Other Window" is desperately looking for original scripts that deal with a pro-gay (women and men) lifestyle with a feminist consciousness.

"We are a theatre group that will not only offer quality entertainment to our own community, but we will also act as an outreach to the non-gay public," according to Deborah Rose, founding member of the new company.

Scripts chosen for production will be paid for. For more information contact Deborah Rose at 463-5027.

### AUG. 20 DOWNTOWN RALLY

The Coalition for Human Rights/Los Angeles drew nearly 200 supporters to its demonstration downtown on Aug. 20 where its wideranging program of issues was made public. Speaking to the audience, more than half of which were women, were representatives from the women's community, black and latin groups, the peace movement and members of the coalition's steering committee. Subjects addressed included: police harassment of gays and minorities, urgent redevelopment programs, the scapegoating of undocumented workers, passage of the ERA, abortion rights, and the current attack on gay and lesbian teachers. Brenda Weathers, of the Alcoholism Center for Women delivered the keynote address which captured the feelings of those in attendance that the Coalition is a viable opportunity to bring together various organizations and individuals to turn back the right wing juggernaut. The Coalition will continue to seek the participation of men and women who support its aims. The next general meeting is Thursday, Sept. 8, 7:30 p.m., Stardust Ballroom 5612 W. Sunset Blvd.

"Our program is a growing experience for staff and participants together, implemented in an atmosphere of sisterhood, supportiveness, sharing. This program is the unique energy of women working with women for women."

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## Teachers May Face Initiative....

continued from page 13

activists in California are being cautious about rattling the saber too early. As of press time, technically speaking, there is no initiative in California -- yet. Despite this fact, gay activists are agreed that if Briggs' initiative is certified, Briggs *will* be successful in his signature drive. "We can't look at this thing rationally," one source explained, "California is a big state and we have our share of hysterics." Gay organizations from San Francisco to San Diego are gearing up for what is termed, "our biggest battle yet." New A.G.E. feels that this *will* be a national issue and that as California goes on gay teachers, so will go the nation.

Fortunately, the two months since the Dade County defeat have seen the birth of almost two dozen major California gay organizations specifically founded to fight battles of this sort. New A.G.E. of L.A. has committed itself to a "massive educational" effort involving the use of major media. PRIDE and SOAR of San Francisco, fresh from a voter registration drive that produced a 2 to 1 pro-gay victory, will undoubtedly register every liberal in Northern California. Other groups are discussing launching a pro-human/gay rights counter initiative, which would appear alongside Briggs' on the June ballot.

Reaction of the Los Angeles press was heartening. They all but accused Briggs of using the initiative campaign to grandstand for his gubernatorial candidacy. Reporters also questioned him about using the name "Save Our Children" when Bryant herself is now under court injunction *not* to use the name (see related story). Briggs weakly asserted, "I don't know anything about that."

Asked if he knew any examples of teachers soliciting in classrooms, dressing in drag, or promoting homosexuality to their students, Briggs said he didn't, but he held up a small pamphlet which he labeled "a recruitment booklet." The booklet appeared to be written to help counsel students who have questions about being gay. A top Los Angeles School Board official later stated that in his 37 years of employment

there had been no cases of homosexual conduct in classrooms or in front of students. The official said he received about a dozen minor complaints per year, half of which were heterosexual, half homosexual.

### Labor Issue Cited

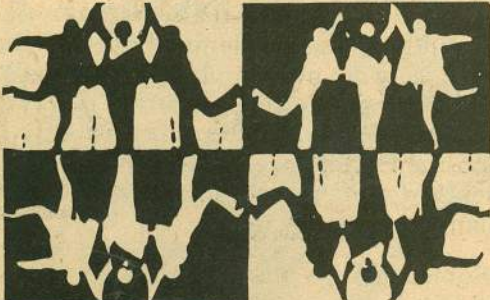
In a later press conference, lesbian spokeswoman Ivy Bottini from the Human Rights Coalition labeled the bill "anti-labor." "This jerk is talking about firing thousands of workers because of who they sleep with," she said. "I hope organized labor will take this very seriously."

Asked what gays would say to parents who might want to sign the initiative, Bottini replied, "I would tell them gays have been teaching your children for centuries. This is nothing new." Spokesman Jim Long said he would ask parents, "Would you not want Michaelangelo to teach your child art, not want Emily Dickenson to teach them poetry?" Shelly Mandel, non-gay A.G.E. spokeswoman and Calif. State N.O.W. Action Coordinator, answered, "I will point out that when you discriminate against one group of people there is a thin line between that and discrimination against other groups. Also in terms of classroom problems, far and away most problems with teachers have been heterosexual advances towards children. People are basically afraid of the myths, so gays have to show people who they really are."

At the press conference the Coalition for Human Rights and New A.G.E. also charged Briggs with augmenting "a climate of fear and suspicion that reeks of McCarthyism."

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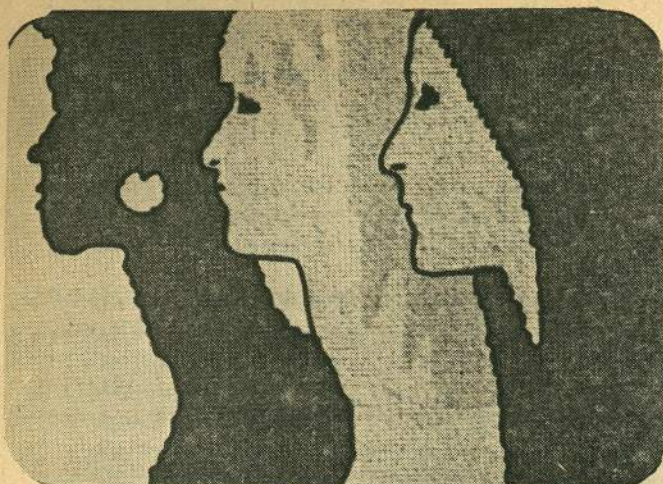
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# Coalition Politics

continued from page 5



NIAA Resource Book

## HOW CAN WE TAKE STEPS FORWARD?

**Jeanne:** It's a new time, a time for coalition politics. We are getting reports from all over the country of lesbians joining in coalition with gay men. Many of us, myself included, haven't worked directly with gay men in many years. Some have never worked with gay men ever. This coaliscing is necessitated by the political times. Despite the power of Lesbian Nation, alone we can't make a dent in the power structure. Coalitions composed of lesbians, gay men and straight women are springing up to meet the crisis. One of our roles in coalition politics is to make gay men understand that lesbians *will* be visible in this struggle.

## IT'S BEEN SAID ABOUT COALITION POLITICS THAT RADICALS END UP WORKING FOR LIBERAL GOALS' DO YOU THINK THIS IS TRUE?

**Maria:** Whether or not it is good strategy to join coalitions with reformist goals (i.e., any coalition working in the legislative arena or around "Constitutional Rights") depends upon our analysis of: the relationship of lesbian feminism to other social movements, the nature of the U.S. Capitalist state, the current state of *our* movement.

My own feelings are that it is very important that we hold on to political rights that we have already won (abortion, anti-sex and sexual discrimination laws and democratic rights to organize) as these rights make our lives easier *and* make it easier to organize as political radicals. However, if this coalition work is not at all times integrated with the struggle to build a strong *radical* movement, they are only reformist, and we, as radicals, are not doing our work. For example, I think it is imperative that lesbian feminists work in coalitions with feminists and gay men to defeat the Briggs initiative. In the process, however, we should use this reformist struggle to build a strong lesbian feminist organization thru outreach to lesbians who are not feminists yet. We should try to make the connections between this attack upon gay teachers and the offensive against integration — and try to form links with the black

and chicano movements. In our support of feminist actions against the Hyde amendment, we must try to educate straight feminists to the connection between lesbianism and feminism. In other words, reformist struggles must always be seen by us as organizing tools. We should not make the same mistake the U.S. Communist Party did in the Thirties, when in working within unions controlled by liberals, and within the Democratic Party, it failed to establish a strong identity of its own. . . . with devastating consequences . . . i.e., the purge of communists from CIO unions which *they* had organized.

Finally we must always recognize that ultimately we can *never* achieve our goals through electoral or legislative politics. Chile is an ominous example of what awaits us if we believe in the constitution and the myth of democratic rights. We have many examples of our own however, Harlan County shows quite well who the state ultimately sides with when push comes to shove.

**Judy:** I don't think it's necessarily true that radicals working in coalitions must end up working on liberal goals. We may be engaged in reformist issues but we have different goals than do liberals. One of them is to make gay men see connections between gay oppression and women's oppression. Gay men are oppressed as not being MAN enough in a woman-hating society and are seen as less than men. I don't think they understand this. Also, I was a separatist for five years, but I am beginning to see that we don't have all of the patriarchal skills they have and we can learn from them. Thirdly, we have to educate gay men as to how our oppressions are linked so that they don't act only in their own interest.

**Jeanne:** One example might be the feminist and lesbian effort in coalescing to build for the International Women's Year Conference in Houston in November. We must make it clear that as lesbians jointly work for the ERA and abortion rights, feminists we work with *don't* get to leave out gay rights. They must be active in our struggle. Another example is a major confrontation between feminists and non-feminists over a sexist leaflet that was passed out at the National Gay Conference in Denver. Feminists, mostly lesbians, pitched a major fight over this leaflet because it was a symbol of the fact that though we are now participating in gay conferences, we won't accept sexist literature being handed out in the name of "gay unity." That's beneath our bottom line. Eventually we accepted a compromise wording of the resolution that condemned the leaflet as sexist, but we were not about to accept the suggested resolution saying only that no future conferences would put out sexist literature. It was bottom line to call upon the Conference participants to recognize that they *had* done something that was unacceptable to lesbian feminists.

**Judy:** Sometimes it's better to stick to your bottom line and lose than to compromise and win and delude yourself as to what has been gained.

## DO YOU BELIEVE ALL LESBIANS SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN COALITION POLITICS?



**Judy:** It's a real danger to see our only work as working with men now. It's important not to substitute coalition politics for what we were doing before. We must make sure that we retain a radical base from which to do the coalition work. It's harder to keep this radical base because so much energy is being drained off doing liberal work. I want to make sure that a separatist community still exists so I have a place to go for sustenance. If there were no such separate lesbian community I might give up politics because it would seem that there weren't much worth fighting for.

**Jeanne:** The most emotionally and politically satisfying work I'm doing now is with lesbian feminists in the IWY FREEDOM RIDE. We're all radical lesbian feminists. It's a welcome relief, a necessary relief!

**Judy:** I have a friend who also used to be a staunch separatist and when I saw her at a recent coalitionist meeting I asked her what she was doing there. She told me she made a conscious decision to put a certain *percentage* of her energy into coalition politics in the gay movement.

We really need to be validating each other's right to work in different ways. We must see each other as fighting different battles in the same war.

### The "Man Question"

#### DO YOU SEE ANY REAL CHANGE IN THE FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS OF GAY MEN?

**Jeanne:** Gay men have absorbed some token gestures. They've almost all grasped the girl-woman distinction by now. They have this other catchy little phrase, "co-sexual parity." This means if you've got chair-people, one has to be female and the other male, four officers, then two must be women, etc. What they haven't grasped is that what radical feminists want is one *feminist*, not just one female body. What co-sexual parity means to them is asking their woman roommate or co-worker, who is a gay identified

lesbian, to be co-president. I think the percentage of effeminate men has grown from 5% in 1972 to 15% in 1977, but the feminist consciousness of the boys really running the gay movement hasn't changed. The one thing that has changed is that more men recognize lesbian power. They now know angry dykes can make a scene so they're more into giving us 50% tokens.

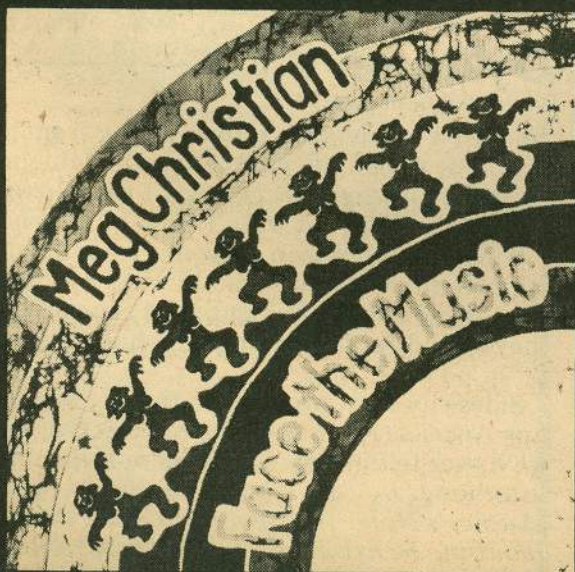
**Judy:** The gays from Dade County have warned us not to make the same mistake they did. They didn't have strong upfront women working in their struggle, and they see that as one reason for their loss. I also think it's real important to break down the us-them issue with gay men and with straight women. We are seen as "the other" in their movements. We need to change this. We have to be vocal and militant with them in a comradely sort of way until they *get* it, because they need us and we need them. We have to attack the enemy *and* educate our allies.



## Breakthrough

*Breakthrough* is the political journal of the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee. The 2nd issue features: our critique of the *Guardian* on party building and on woman's emancipation, statement on Lenard Peltier's conviction with a reprint of a statement by the Native Study Group, a comment on Puerto Rican solidarity work, Lenin on Guerrilla warfare, and other articles.

*Breakthrough No. 1*, with the PFOC's Provisional Political Statement and a major section on women's oppression and liberation, and *The Split of the WUO*, is also available. \$1.00 each, plus \$.25 postage. Pay to John Brown Book Club, P.O. Box 40614, San Francisco, CA 94110. Six issue sub \$5. Free to prisoners.



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## Liz Stevens

*continued from page 6*

it off.' On top of the difficulties of poverty, working class people end up feeling bad about themselves and about their lives in general."

"A lot of us have thought that the women's movement is all middle class women and it's true that it's middle class in its assumptions, its values and sensitivities, though not, I think, in numbers. The L.A. Women's Community Forum discussed class one night and women talked about their childhoods and feelings they'd had growing up. I was sitting there and all these things were coming back to me. My lover was there and my closest friends, they're all middle class, and I was overcome. I kept thinking, 'Oh my god, I can't speak. I can't tell them these things about me, where I'm really from.'"

"We talked about ways we "pass" for middle class, tricks we've learned to fool people into thinking we're from middle class homes. One of the ways I've passed is by becoming verbal and articulate. I don't have the education a lot of other women have, but if you're articulate you can pass. At this Forum, out of 85 women attending it turned out that *half* had been passing."

"I have learned and gained a lot from working with middle class women. Each of us has learned different types of survival tricks that we can share. Middle class women encouraged me to try for dreams that seemed so completely out of my reach. They encouraged me to take major chances, to take economic risks, which wasn't easy!

"I can remember as a child putting playing cards in my shoes so dirt and rocks wouldn't get in the holes. And then trying hard to remember to sit with my feet on the floor, not to cross my legs so anybody would see the holes in my shoes."

"As difficult as it is to talk about these things, talking about class is more painful, I think, for middle and upper class women. It's painful for working class women too, but for us the benefits are much more obvious, like when women talk to men about women's liberation. For women with more class privileges though, things come up that you don't feel good about, that make you feel really bad, and that often you can't do anything about. It's such a volatile issue, but I think it's vital that we learn to talk about it without guilt and without blame."

Meanwhile, when her work takes her into particularly repugnant places like the Bank of America or any government building, Liz plays a fantasy game with herself. She says, "I play 'What-will-this-building-be-after-the-revolution?' You can turn banks and army bases and prisons into very nice cultural centers or schools or anything you'd like to see. It's a good game and it does keep you going."

## Noble Politics

*continued from page 7*

the resolution and herself pause and make a compromise resolution that would be more acceptable. The compromise resolution, which more politely cited "sexist graphics, literature, and programming," rather than Michael's single leaflet, was finally approved.

After the vote, Ginny Apuzzo, Co-Chair of GRNL, rose to personally apologize to the Conference for the distribution of the sexist leaflet. She allowed as how it was easy for leaders to accept the applause of an audience, but not its criticism. Apuzzo had been the only one of the five GRNL officers to recognize the leaflet's sexism and vote against its distribution before the Conference.

## Pre-requisite for Gay Unity

As the Conference closed it was clear that the Gay Rights Movement is open to all homosexuals but essentially run by gay males. Coalition politics was the call of the day, but as in all healthy relationships, both partners must have strong and equal power. In the Gay Movement, lesbian feminists have the opportunity to act as a power block that can caucus, compromise, deal and get results — all in the name of human rights for homosexuals.

But if coalition politics is the solution for achieving gay rights, our lesbian feminist leadership must continue to demand and coalesce for our gay rights on a non-sexist platform that equally addresses the needs of women.

## Falcons Expel Lesbians

*continued from page 27*

town. At 11 p.m. that night, the two D.C. women were awakened by a Falcon employee and were asked to leave. They were accused of trespassing and were told that the three young women who were renting the room "felt uncomfortable" with their gay lifestyle. The two D.C. women were forced to leave under threat of legal action. The third D.C. woman had paid to use that same room. She was asked to leave also, but was "allowed" to sleep in the chaperone's room.

It was the day after these events at Holiday Inn that Salerno asked the D.C. women to leave the camp. At that time Salerno provided a written statement to the effect that refund fees would be forthcoming immediately. The D.C. women have not yet received their money.

*(D.C. Women's Center Newsletter)*

## Dykes on Bikes

*continued from page 27*


and drew some black rubber piping from her knapsack. She pulled the cold cans out of the insulated piping and tossed them to us. "I told Bobbi to send out another jeep if I wasn't back in fifteen minutes."

When the other jeep arrived it took the driver five minutes to determine exactly what was wrong, rig a tow to get us back to camp, and assure Kathy where they would find new parts, and how they would fix it "in no time."

Sideswiped by two cars on the freeway back to Los Angeles, Hilda and I agreed we were safer than we'd ever felt in the city. Safer out there in desert sisterhood.

*(Author's Note: In essence and spirit this story is about the Henya Bike and Jeeping Club of Southern California. Inquiries addressed to HENYA, c/o Tide Publications will be forwarded.)*





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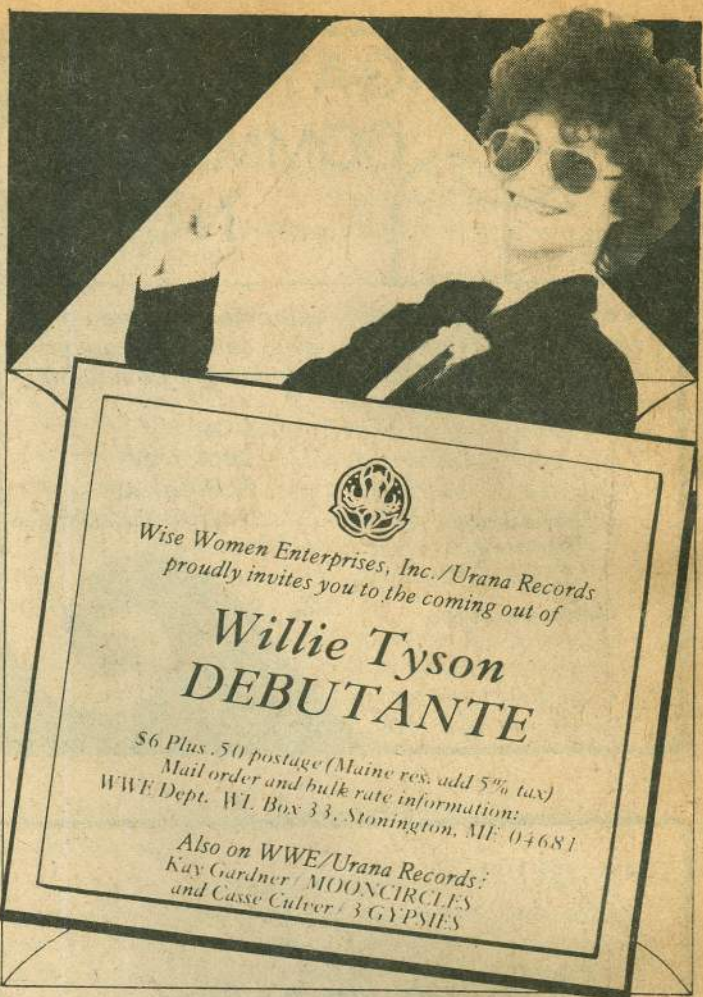
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